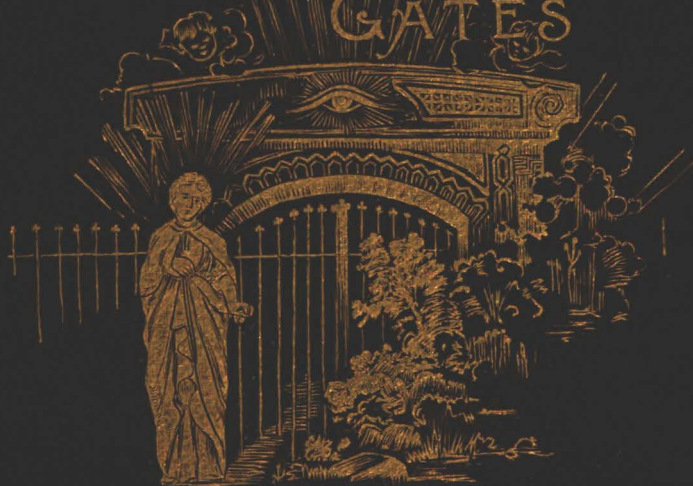


OUTSIDE
THE
GATES



SHELHAMER



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OUTSIDE THE GATES:
AND
OTHER TALES AND SKETCHES.

BY
A BAND OF SPIRIT INTELLIGENCES,

THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF

MARY THERESA SHELHAMER.

*And Love shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and the faces of the
sad shall grow radiant in the light of Eternal Dawn; the
weary-hearted shall find rest; and the heavily-laden
shall drop their burdens; for the Land of the
Blest overfloweth with boundless mer-
cies for all who enter therein.*

SECOND EDITION.

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BY MARY THERESA SHELHAMER.

TO
The Memory of
JAMES GORDON,
Late of Cincinnati, Ohio,
This Volume is Faithfully Inscribed
BY THE AUTHOR.



MEMORIAL.

JAMES GORDON, the gentleman in whose memory this work has been prepared, departed this life from Cincinnati, Ohio, November 16th, 1886, at the midnight hour. He was the son of the late Jesse and Harriet Gordon, of Hampstead, N.H., a couple widely known for their sterling integrity and large philanthropy. For a series of years Jesse Gordon filled important positions of trust upon the town board of Hampstead, and his decease, which came at middle life, was felt to be a loss to the community. Soon after the decease of his father, and at an early age, the subject of this sketch left this section of the country, seeking business interests in various places South and West, finally settling in Cincinnati, and becoming one of its most energetic and respected citizens. He was a man of honor, whose rare probity and sterling character won for him the regard of all,—even of those who could not agree with his own well pronounced opinions,—and will cause him to be sadly missed in the community where he has been so widely and favorably known.

Of his many benevolent enterprises and charitable deeds but few are known. Unostentatious in his daily life, this man made it a point never to display his good works to the public eye; yet the poor and the unfortunate were ever sure of finding in him a friend who would sympathize with them in their misfortunes, and assist them to rise above the clouds; while no worthy object of benevolent appeal ever turned to him in vain. A correspondent, — “B.,” — writing to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* concerning Mr. Gordon’s philanthropy, takes occasion to say: —

“His charities were well devised and comprehensive. The field of one was a Sunday-school he established for the little waifs of Cincinnati — boys and girls who were practically without home comforts, and whom he fed and clothed and taught as a pure labor of love. This school finally increased to more than eight hundred pupils, and several good people, with money in their pockets and love in their hearts, came to Mr. Gordon’s assistance, and made it one of the prize local beneficiary institutions of the day. It became the foundation of as noble a charity as is known to our citizens. He started several young men upon a career which finally led to prosperity, but he spent no money in foolishness, and very little that did not return him dividends in good to others well accomplished.”

Mr. Gordon was not only a valued member of the “Cuvier Club” of Cincinnati, — a club composed of a number of the best known and most esteemed men of that city, — but was also prominently connected with

the Chamber of Commerce there, which body, at his decease took occasion to frame a Memorial of its departed member, eulogistic to his life and character. In the order of Free Masonry James Gordon stood very high, — the grandest principles of which he sought to bring into daily application in his benevolent life. By his noble character and general fitness for the position, he was elected to the 33d degree of Masonry some years ago, — an honor which he highly prized and daily sought to merit.

Years ago Mr. Gordon became an investigator of Spiritualism, receiving many evidences of its truth, and gaining a conviction of the reality of spirit communion, which he never failed to boldly and faithfully avow to sympathizer and dissenter alike, using his influence always in behalf of the cause so dear to his soul.

In relation to the funeral exercises over the remains of this good man, the *Banner of Light* of November 27th has the following: —

“On Wednesday, the 17th instant, services peculiar to the Masonic Order were held over the remains in Cincinnati, which were followed by remarks from those who had known the deceased, testifying to his sterling worth and high character.

“On the evening of the same day, the body, surrounded with flowers and encased in a broadcloth-covered casket, was placed on the cars *en route* to the home of Mr. Gordon's sister in Lowell, Mass., where it arrived on the evening of the 19th. At this latter place, appropriate and beautiful services, commemorative of the

life and character of the deceased, were conducted on the afternoon of Sunday, the 21st, by Miss Shelhamer, in accordance with a request made by Mr. Gordon to his sister a year previous. The exercises consisted of fine vocal selections by a trained quartette, a soulful invocation to the Father of all, followed by an inspired address full of loving consolation, and replete with the truths and lessons of Spiritualism, by Miss Shelhamer.

"At the tomb a body of Masons closed the service with a prayer by one of their number, followed by a few fitting remarks from the highest brother present, and the casting of sprigs of evergreen upon the casket.

"The floral tributes to the departed friend were elegant and appropriate; among the pieces we may mention an exquisite cross from the 'Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite,' sent by the Masons of Lowell, an elegant pillow bearing the word 'Rest,' from one sister of the deceased, a beautiful wreath from another, and a massive crown from Miss Shelhamer.

"The entire arrangements of the funeral were in accordance with the Spiritual Philosophy, and nobly represented the life and faith of the good man who has gone to his reward."

And now I come to that portion of Mr. Gordon's life that is connected with the compilation of this work. For many years he was a warm and devoted friend of mine, and to the hour of his decease that friendship was attested in many noble ways, making his memory a blessed one to me. Through a series of years he held frequent and happy communication with his own beloved spirit friends, through my mediumship. The messages he thus received were of a characteristic and

conclusive nature to him; and he held unbounded faith in the watchful guardianship of those unseen friends over his life, as he daily looked forward to the hour of his reunion with them on high.

Among that group of pure and wise intelligences who were wont to convey to him words of friendship and instruction—all of whom I have myself learned to hold highly in esteem—came a family whom many years ago Mr. Gordon loved as his most devoted and true-hearted friends, and he had never ceased to mourn the loss of these dear ones until they approached him from spirit life, bearing their messages of undying affection, with tokens of identity. This family when on earth resided in Boone County, Kentucky, and consisted of father, mother, and three daughters, all but one of whom passed to spirit life long since. It was from the messages brought by this harmonious band, that my friend received his most valued and positive evidence of immortality.

In October, 1884, while slowly recovering from a serious illness, I was approached by the head of this spirit band, who announced to me that as soon as my health would permit he desired to write a series of articles with my hand, for publication in the *Banner of Light*, to be called "Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint," and that immediately after their appearance they would be followed by a story in the same paper,

and through the same mediumship, entitled "Outside the Gates." "This story," affirmed my spirit friend, — who to all but his beloved charge, James Gordon, preferred to be known as "Benefice,"—"will be the personal narrative of a spirit I shall bring to you. She is not a member of my circle of relatives, nor did we know her on earth. She has suffered deeply, and is now a grand spirit. For her sake I shall not tell you her name, nor where she lived; all you have to do is to receive her kindly and do her bidding."

In due time the articles of "Benefice" were published, and immediately that spirit brought to me another, — a sweet and mild influence, — who gave to me, as fast as I could pen them, the chapters of "Outside the Gates," which appears in this book. I have never learned who this spirit really was; but I do know that, whatever she has been, she is now pure, and holy, and true.

Previous to this time, the spirit wife and two daughters of "Benefice" had frequently written narratives and accounts of personal experiences through my hand for their friend James; and now the eldest daughter, adopting the *nom de plume* "Morna," signified her intention of writing a story, entitled "Here and Beyond." This was printed in the *Banner of Light*, and well received. Later, other spiritual stories were given me by the same sweet spirit, and they have appeared in various

publications. I know that I am truthful in my assertions that these productions, though passing through no mortal brain but my own, and penned by no hand but the one now tracing these lines, have emanated from the intelligences of another sphere, and that in their formation I have been inspired and influenced by those wise, brave spirits of whom I write.

With the exception of "Outside the Gates," all the stories appearing in this volume and elsewhere, from my pen, have been written in connection with "Morna," the beautiful angel whom I love. "Benefice," her sainted father, has given the world his "Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint," and Susie, the lovely youngest daughter, has written "What I found in Spirit Life," which appears in this work, and which I am assured is a faithful account of her own experience.

Accepting the truth as brought to him by his spirit friends, and believing their statement that the world is hungry for knowledge of spirit life as well as for instruction that applies to the cultivation of the spirit, my friend, James Gordon, intended to collect certain of these stories and writings into a volume for public benefit. The precarious state of his health forbade this work, and he reluctantly abandoned it. Knowing his desire, I have taken up the labor, to give it forth to the world in the name of that good man, whose band of spiritual attendants made possible its appearance.

He has gone on to his reward, while those on earth who knew his worth mourn the absence of a devoted friend. In his departure the world loses a benefactor and a shining example. Yet we would not call him back to the woes, the turmoils, and the afflictions of earth. Rather would we seek to so emulate his good deeds as to be judged worthy to follow him.

Dear friend, thou hast gained the victory of life, thou hast won the immortal crown, and in tenderness of soul we ask the Lord to "be with thee and bless thee, and make his countenance to shine upon thee, and give thee peace," until, in the fullness of time, we shall meet thee in thy blest abode.

M. T. SHELHAMER.

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PART I.

THOUGHTS FROM A SPIRIT'S STANDPOINT.

BY "BENEFICE."



NUMBER ONE.

EARNEST Spiritualists who have given much thought and study to the investigation of spiritual truths, such as wise, large-hearted, and advanced spirits have to teach, will have learned that the spiritual world, though a distinct part of the universe, and occupying a definite point in space, yet belongs and is closely allied to this mundane sphere; that it becomes the abode of those who are divested of the mortal flesh, and unable to longer retain their hold upon materiality; and that all classes of intelligences, from the purest and sweetest souls to the most degraded and corrupt beings, people this spirit world.

As returning spirits have for the last thirty years taught and demonstrated to mortals, the mere process of death, working in the physical structure of man, and releasing him from the environments of matter, does not necessarily produce a change in his nature, nor does it revolutionize the essential characteristics of his being.

Pre-natal conditions, the laws of association, surrounding circumstances, the power of training, the force

of habit, and the general conditions of his earthly experience have all contributed in molding his character and stamping his individuality. The discipline and the career of the body have stamped their impress upon the man, making him what he appears at the close of his mortal life.

It would be strange indeed should the transition to another sphere of existence work such a change in him as to cause all the effects of his past career to become as naught, or to be blotted out forever; and it would be equally remarkable should he who has lived a reckless and an ignoble life become suddenly purified and exalted in character and attainment merely because he had stepped from the body.

Therefore let it be distinctly understood, that man finds himself to be the same individual after the decease of the body that he was before. Was he gentle, philanthropic, and benevolent in disposition, honest and noble in character, and studious in mental proclivity, he will prove the same in the upper world. Was he unjust and harsh in dealing with his fellows, did he seize upon dishonest schemes in business transactions, was he neglectful of mental and moral training, then will he find himself occupying the same plane that he maintained before passing from the body; and yet, although a man begins life *there* precisely where he *left it here*, it by no means follows that he has fallen into a narrow rut from which there is no escape. On the contrary, death opens a very wide avenue to the passing spirit, and affords new opportunities and powers of which he may make use to rise to higher things. Thus, while one may be undeveloped in moral and intellec-

tual attainments, he may come to realize and feel his condition of ignorance, and desire to gain instruction that will lift him higher. In allowing this earnest desire to grow he calls around him pure-minded and enlightened intelligences who are glad to become his tutors and protectors, and who teach him how to become truly a man—one capable of expressing the grandest attributes of immortal *selfhood*.

Spiritualists profess to believe that the deeds committed on earth leave their reflex upon the spirit, and by their effects produce happiness or pain, when reviewed in the clear light and understanding of the eternal condition; yet that they positively realize this great truth is an open question.

As one of many spirits whose duty and mission have been largely found in ministering to spirits suffering pain and misery, I have been brought into contact with souls whose keenest anguish was caught from remembrances of the wrong they had done on earth; deeds of unkindness, acts of oppression, words spoken harshly, but little thought of at the time they were expressed, have been recorded on the tablets of memory, and here in the spirit world reappear to discomfort and confuse the soul. If the memory of little unkind acts brings an intense pain, what shall be said of those heavier deeds of oppression and of injustice that crowd and torture human beings with remorseful energy?

When a disembodied soul awakens to the truth that he has deeply injured a fellow-being, has defrauded another of his rights, has done evil to others, the lash of remorse is like a scorpion's sting to his quickened nature. It is true that the more sensitive the spirit, the

greater his sufferings at the remembrance of wrongdoing; but let the sensibilities of even the most hardened become once aroused, and he daily grows more conscious of his offence and more anxious to atone for it.

To minister to such souls as these is the delicate mission of many cultured and intelligent spirits, and it is a work not to be disregarded nor lightly dismissed.

Moral suasion and gentle and persistent guidance are the weapons used by spirit warriors in their fight against evil. Error is the concomitant of ignorance, and none will do wrong who are wise and knowing. Undeveloped souls have risen, or are rising, to a comprehension of the best interests of life, through the painful experience outgrowing from their own past mistakes and misdemeanors; and wise spirits, instead of turning from them in disdain and indifference to their lowly condition, stoop to help them up to a higher comprehension of the laws of life, and to a pure atmosphere of being.

Education, then, is the magic wand wielded in the spiritual realm by those intelligences who go about among the lowly and unfortunate, among the uncultured and depraved, for the purpose of giving them the knowledge they require.

Teachers competent to instruct, ready to lay aside personal grandeur for the task of guiding wayward souls, wise enough to discriminate as to the special needs and desires of each one of their charge, filled with the power of sympathy, so that no soul, however debased or unlovely, will be cast out of the fold of their instructive, uplifting work — constantly attend the haunts where unhappiness and evil abound, and seek

by their ministering power to correct the tendencies of error, to banish ignorance, and to establish a love of order, of harmony, of study, and of good works in the hearts of those they labor to bless.

Instruction and love are freely bestowed upon the struggling masses of the spirit world, whose lives have been sunk in sin and error. They are taught to see themselves as others see them; there they eventually come "to know as they are known"; this knowledge of necessity brings them pain, but it is their first step in the process of regeneration. Next, they are shown that they are not outcasts, with no hope of redemption, but gentle faces beam upon them, kindly voices speak words of admonition and love; and they are made to feel themselves human beings, capable of advancement, and worthy of self-elevation. Thus the power of love stirs within them; they recognize and reciprocate the tenderness of their would-be helpers and guides, and they at once make an effort to follow the teachings presented to them. Then the scheme of instruction is entered upon, and these lowly ones become eager, earnest students, repaying their tutors with a desire to learn and to grow in spiritual power and knowledge.

The spirit world may be likened to a large school, which scholars of different grades of advancement have entered. Those whom we are dealing with just at present are the unfortunate souls whose natures have become warped and debased through the experiences of earthly life.

You hear a great deal of evil spirits, and of impure and unholy influences. You are warned against dealing with them; and you have been told that such

swarm back to earth in untold numbers to prey upon the innocent and unwary who may be drawn under their power. As if spirit life was a moral pest-house of iniquity, the doors of which are forever open, permitting blasts of its deadly poison to contaminate the lives of earth's helpless children, you have been advised to keep clear of spiritual gatherings, and not to encourage the utterances of unseen intelligences, lest you be filled with evil from the deadly contact.

Are you to suppose that the moral government of the "higher life" is less than that of earth? That there is no restraining power in operation there that will deter the wrong-doer from effecting evil continuously? That there is no system of management by which the innocent and helpless denizens of mortality may be protected from the baleful influences of the corrupt and vile of the lower spheres? Then were it indeed far from a "higher life," and incapable of affording man that enlargement of power and enjoyment of a progressive existence that he has been taught to expect.

But the pure and powerful intelligences of the spirit world do exercise a ward and watch over those who are not so far advanced as themselves; they do provide teachers, helpers, and guides for the wretched and undeveloped souls who need attending to. They are constantly and indefatigably working for the regeneration of the depraved and despairing. Their moral influence acts as a restraining power upon the vicious and mischievous, and prevents them from reflecting sorrow upon any but themselves.

I declare to you that although numbers of unholy or

unhappy spirits are daily reaching the spirit world from the confines of the flesh, and that although many such may, through their restless, turbulent condition, be drawn back to earthly quarters, and that although they may be known to work mischief among those mortals who are themselves impure in thought and questionable in action, they can never unpleasantly affect either the happiness or the welfare of the pure and good.

“Evil spirits” may approach and make themselves known to you ; but if your thoughts are free from guile, and if love for mankind and a benevolent desire to be of use inspire you, you need not fear ; such will have no desire nor power to harm you ; they will only receive a blessing by coming in contact with you, and they may have been brought to you by some beneficent guide for that very purpose.

Inharmony, discord, dishonest dealing, and impurity will open a door to malicious and depraved spirits. When once they enter they will not soon depart, but will make havoc with your happiness — but you yourself have invited them in. Cultivate a pure life, sympathy and love for mankind, become honorable in your thoughts and transactions, and you will either banish them, or assist in converting them into angels of light.

But only a small number of the ignorant and debased who pass to spirit life ever return to molest mortals — most of such are surrounded by environments which, while they serve to restrain the unbridled passions of their natures, yet stimulate them to conquer and to overcome the evil within. Revealing to the soul, as they do, the true inwardness and perversity of the life it has lived, and showing how it may rise above the past

to a brighter condition, these instructive laws bring the wrong-doer into closer harmony with his spiritual being and with the purposes of life; and he eventually learns through obedience, and by the lessons of love and wisdom afforded him by his spirit teachers, to balance the dark record of the past with a bright report of the present and to become a "law unto himself."

Among the contrite and repentant souls I have communed with, I have found not a few who on earth were considered among the favored and respectable classes of society. I am not now speaking of those who *appeared* honorable but whose souls bore the stamp of "hypocrisy"—but of those who were really intelligent and well-meaning, and who defrauded no man of his wealth, no woman of her honor. These parties possessed means, and opportunities for accomplishing much good were afforded them; some of these opportunities may have been embraced, but all were not; and if so, opportunities were not sought for, through which good works could have been wrought. The greatest affliction of these souls, the loud cry of their hearts, arise from the fact of their *omissions* to do. They did not make the best use of the means at their command. They did *not* accomplish the good they might have done. They did not leave the world brighter and humanity happier because of their lives; and the knowledge of *this* has brought them a keen pang of remorse and shame.

I have in mind one man who possessed on earth great wealth, and wielded a wide influence among his fellow-men. His word, his example in benefiting humanity, would have extended a great ways, and would have

inspired others to speak the word and do the deed. But he neglected opportunities; he closed his eyes to the great slums of ignorance and suffering on every hand, and moved on, coining his millions till death summoned him to the other life.

Once established there, and familiar with his surroundings, once convinced that the scrapings and accumulations of the material life were swept away for him, he began to reflect upon his life; once assured that spiritual wealth means honor and probity, and the accomplishment of good deeds, he began to count up his gains and to realize how small they were. True, he had sometimes bestowed charity upon a needy mendicant; for certain, he had occasionally contributed a handsome sum for some charitable object; but compared to what he *could* have done with the means at his command, he had accomplished very little good, and he entered spirit life a poor man.

Sins of omission are common in the world. If we refuse to give a word of cheer or a smile of encouragement to a weary soul, we are guilty of them; if we neglect to do *all* the good we can with the *means at our disposal*, we shall not be held blameless on high, even though we violate no special law.

The moral government of the spiritual world is maintained by the high and ennobling principles upon which it is established. The directors and tutors of moral ethics rule by love alone, while the pure, uplifting magnetism that emanates from their holy lives stimulates and strengthens the weakened sensibilities of those who come under their charge for disciplinary tuition. The spirit who passes from the body debased

in character, whose moral faculties are undeveloped, who has merged the higher sensibilities in the constant exercise of unholy passions, is looked upon as a diseased soul. His nature is warped and one-sided; his spiritual powers are not unfolded; his entire being is out of harmony.

Such a spirit needs the services of a physician; requires to be placed amid conditions that will repress all further growth of those passions that have run riot in his nature, and where the opposite traits and attributes of his being may become encouraged to expand and blossom.

As soon as possible, wise intelligences who have a positive magnetic power, approach and exercise their influence over him; his own mental and moral atmosphere may be in such a state of turpitude he cannot *see* them, but after a time he begins to *feel* their power working within him; it arouses him to thought; it awakens him to his condition and to his own needs; it continues to operate upon him until he cries out for help — until he prays to be lifted out of *himself*, until he desires to grow in purity and goodness.

Then he is fitted to receive the instruction his teachers have to impart, to feel the effect of the moral restraint they throw around him, and to sense the *uplifting* power of their presence. He is now conducted to a sanitarium, where he receives the magnetic power and instructive lessons he requires to bring his soul into shapeliness, and he begins to give evidences of his genuine desire to be of use, by striving to do good to others, by obedience to his guides, and by studiously devoting himself to his tasks.

To say that we have no reformatory measures of discipline in the spirit world is to assert that which is not true. Yet mortals may fall into such an error, because undeveloped souls are sometimes brought back to mediums and to the conditions of earth life to gain their first lesson in morality, and to make the first step of progress. The reason for this course on the part of spirit philanthropists is that sometimes they have beings under their charge whose nature is so intensely earthy, whose desires and inclinations partake so largely of the physical life, that they are constantly attracted backward toward materiality. It is almost impossible to convince such that they have passed through the change of death; but they persist in believing themselves still incarnated in the body.

By guiding such an one to a medium, and enveloping him in the atmospheric aura of such a sensitive, the wise teacher demonstrates to the spirit the power he has obtained by parting with his physical form; and when the incredulous spirit finds himself in possession of a mediumistic organism, and expressing himself by the means of speech, writing, or signs to a mortal, it dimly dawns upon him that as he is here in the midst of unfamiliar surroundings, it must be true that he has passed through some change. However, the full force of his condition does not strike him until he withdraws from contact with the medium and loosens his control of her organism; then the psychological power that has so long held him in the thought of a physical life becomes broken, and for the first time he realizes that he is no longer a mortal.

The spirit is usually humbled after such an experience

—sometimes he is very much alarmed—and sinks into a state of quiet submission that enables his instructor to operate upon him with ease, and to bring him to an understanding of himself. Thus the true reformatory discipline begins. The hitherto refractory one knows he cannot longer rule by the passions he has so long exercised, and knowing no other means of command, he remains quiet, and listens to and obeys those who are wiser than he, and who he now realizes desire to help and to uplift him.

I am satisfied that in every instance where an evil or undeveloped spirit visits a pure-minded medium, or makes himself known to a circle of honest, earnest people, he is attended by a wise and exalted intelligence who acts as his teacher and guide, and who at the same time holds his turbulent passions in check, by the influence of a high spiritual magnetism exerted upon him. Therefore, no medium, no kindly disposed person, need hesitate to receive and give gentle admonition and good advice to such returning spirits, for by so doing he or she is assisting the protecting angels of love and mercy in their beneficent labor of educating and uplifting repentant, sorrowing souls.

Spirit life in its moral, religious, social, and political affairs is not one whit less advanced than are the most progressive departments of human life on earth. Indeed, it is far ahead in its disciplinary, its tutelary, its socialistic, and its civil rules. Its methods of government and of restraint are all that the most enlightened, and humanitarian soul could demand for his race. Were it not so, there would be no advancement for man, and the operations of death would prove anything but a blessing to his soul.

When intelligent man shall so learn to govern himself that he will be his own sure guide to happiness; when he controls his appetites and passions so as to make a pure temple of his body; when he learns to so work in love for his neighbor that prisons will be banished; when through his pure and blameless life the avocation of the physician, the druggist, the lawyer, and the jury will have disappeared, he will be able to establish a system of moral government similar to that which obtains in the spirit world; and when he does all this thoroughly, he will understand how to provide for and control the less tamable classes; to guard and watch over the criminal ones who come under his observation, so as to protect society from their ravages, and to save them to themselves as human beings, capable of being made good, moral, law-abiding citizens.

NUMBER TWO.

WHILE I have declared that the spirit world is not a moral pest-house open toward the earth; while I have intimated that many of the so-called evil spirits approaching mortals are guided hither for educational purposes; and while I have affirmed that these undeveloped ones are not nearly as mischievous and malicious in their encroachments upon physical life as many seem to think, yet I by no means intended to assert that such spirits do not sometimes work evil among men, or create confusion where harmony should reign.

I have said that no one can be molested by unhappy

spirits who does not open the door for their admittance, and I wish to reiterate that statement. If selfishness lurks in your breast, or inharmony and dissatisfaction with your lot in life; if envy, or jealousy, or scorn of any one is fostered, or if baser thoughts and motives are encouraged, you throw out the latch-string which mischievous influences can seize, and thus open the doors of your lives. Unless the magnetic emanations of your own natures are discolored by the effects of impure thoughts and unworthy motives, such spirits cannot remain within them; they are repelled by the clear light of truth, and can only be brought to it by the superior guiding force of some holy and intelligent soul. Therefore if you will keep your lives clean, you need fear no evil, for only holy intelligences will encamp around you; and if at any time a crude, undeveloped spirit comes, rest assured he will be brought by holy powers on a beneficent errand for himself.

Mediums, of all people, should be so circumstanced and surrounded as to develop the very best attributes and faculties of their natures. The thought of personal grandeur and ambition should be as far from their hearts as it was from the pure, white soul of the Nazarene. Selfishness should be unknown to them, and only the desire to do good should animate their breasts.

And why? Because the sweeter and more unselfish the heart, the purer and brighter is the spiritual atmosphere that surrounds it, and the holier and higher the influences that control or attend it.

If her intentions are good, her aspirations pure, the spirits who approach a medium will be benefited,

strengthened, and uplifted by their contact with her sensitive nature; but if the tendencies are toward self-gratification, of ambition, power, and pride,—if the aspirations are confined to thoughts of material grandeur,—then the aura emanating from her life is cloudy and turbid in appearance, and the spirits who approach it are depressed and made unhappy by its contact.

I have studied the needs and the laws of mediumship; none have more charity, more love for the sensitive instruments of the higher life than have I; I am not of those who declare the laborer is *not* worthy of his hire, nor do I advise mediums to give their time, vitality, and power, without compensation. I know that mediums must be gently dealt with: give them love and sympathy and kindly feeling; take away the depressing thought that their next day's food, or the monthly rent of their abode, depends upon the issue of the sitting they are about to give; make them feel that you respect their honor and have faith in their integrity, and they will not attempt to deceive you; on the contrary, they will grow sweet and lovable under your benign influence, and will enable the spirit world to correctly and divinely echo its heavenly strains through their medial powers.

It is a truth that those on earth who associate with and surround a medium have as much to do with the unfoldment of her life and the character of her medial powers as do the spirits who are attracted to her side. Indeed, the conditions of harmony or of discord that rule the lives of those around her determine the class of influences that will approach and affect her happiness for good or ill.

Man is very much a creature of circumstances. He is swayed and influenced by the conditions around him. How true indeed is this of those whose inner natures are constantly operated upon by unseen intelligences. The hearts of these sensitives become very sensible to pain or pleasure. They are susceptible to the slightest change in the moral or affectional natures of those about them. Their dispositions may become sweetened or soured according to the attention or indifference bestowed upon them by their associates; and they will be very quick to respond to the kindness of those who love them.

As a brilliant flame shines with clear light through a crystal vase, or gleams but dimly through an opaque vessel, so the bright gift of mediumship vibrates in harmony and power through the sensitive organism that dwells in an atmosphere of love and peace; but jangles uncertainly and feebly through the susceptible child of earth who is situated in the midst of that spiritual coldness that is generated by discord, indifference, or distrust.

As love is the power by which wise, exalted spirits rule the spheres—a power felt and acknowledged by all classes of society; a power supreme in its might and uplifting in its greatness—so it is the grand impelling force that will subjugate and harmonize all unruly passions, all unhappy hearts of earth. It is the lever that is to lift humanity to a higher and richer plane of development. It is the power that will purify, elevate, and perfect mediumship, bringing its subjects into a condition of concord, of purity and goodness, that will attract beneficent teachers from immortal life to give them guidance.

We need not fear to bestow our sympathy and affection too freely upon mortals or spirits, for even the brightest souls are illuminated by such gifts, and the vilest of all are uplifted and blessed.

Mediums, with the light that is yours, with the power you possess, and under the conditions that come to you, *do your best!* Make life as sweet as possible; be as faithful as you know how to your conceptions of right, and no evil spirit will do you harm; but do not allow ambition or selfishness to rule your lives; such unworthy motives give power to the impure who live apart from the flesh to annoy and to work mischief for you.

Recognizing the lamentable fact that thousands of crude-minded, ignorant, and lawless spirits are annually passing from earth to the "other life," — knowing that constant accessions are being made to the undeveloped classes of the spirit world, — the question is not what shall be done with these ignorant, carnal-minded beings, but how shall we stay the mighty tide of evil that surges around souls on earth, and that bears them on its waves to the eternal shore? If the march of unprogressed and unprogressive souls to the spirit world could be suspended, and passionate, reckless, degraded beings should no longer reach that life, it would be a comparatively light task for the zealous, benevolent, and wise souls of the upper spheres to accomplish a regenerating work in the hearts of those erring ones who had already crossed over.

Love being the controlling force and spiritual instruction the enlightening power that these exalted teachers employ, it would be but a question of time how long

before the ignorance, the rebelliousness, or the lawless desire of those under their protecting care would melt away before the light of that knowledge, that conception of truth and goodness, that comprehension of the purposes of existence that would surely dawn upon them; while the prospect of this mundane world, bearing a humanity whose deeds were all of goodness, and with none upon it who were evil and depraved, would inspire such hapless ones to emulate those they beheld, in thoughts and efforts toward a pure and honorable life.

Error on earth, evil in the hearts of mortals, do not contribute to the advancement of undeveloped spirits. Those disembodied ones whose physical appetites and passions have been fostered until they have engulfed the soul in a state of wild disorder, are only confirmed in their reckless and hapless condition by a contemplation of others on earth indulging in unbridled sin and iniquity; while in looking further and beholding *society*, with its respectability, its lofty dignity, and its self-righteousness, calmly indifferent to the wrong-doing, to the slavish condition, to the ignorance and brutality of the criminal classes, except where it finds it necessary to bring them before the bar of judgment to protect itself from personal injury, — such spirits are prone to continue in their evil ways, and to sink still deeper in the slough of debasement that vengeful, passionate thoughts create.

Therefore it follows that if our lower humanity *here* becomes purged of its impurities and lifted into an atmosphere of decency and usefulness, the lowest classes "over there" will rise accordingly. More: the unde-

veloped spirits will grow active, industrious, and high-minded rapidly, for they will not only have the example of goodness before them on earth, but they will have the wise teachings and ministrations of exalted intelligences around them to inspire their efforts; while the sight of happy, beautiful souls above them, living in a state of peace, will be an incentive to them to press onward and to do well.

While hordes of lawless spirits constantly surge to the spirit world, mortals must expect to be occasionally or even frequently annoyed by learning of their return into contact with physical life, and alarmed at the thoughts of the mischief they may work. The great remedy for this evil is to refrain from sending to us such ignorant, unhappy beings.

We will agree to take care of and restrain all the reckless, degraded beings who have already yielded up their physical bodies, together with those who, already hardened in sin and crime, may pass from earth during the next few years, provided society *on earth* will agree to allow no more new recruits to take the places of those who drop out of the ranks of iniquity and moral corruption. Bands upon bands of zealous spirits are ready to take up this work in connection with mortals — prepared to look after the evil-doer on our side, if you but reform and restrain the criminal here.

We do not expect that a work of redemption will be wrought in the souls of sin-stained men and women here; such must know *our* methods of regeneration before they can see the light. But we do assert that human society can prevent the spread of error and evil by attending to the needs of those who are growing up

around it in the midst of moral corruption. Myriads of children are annually born into mortal life who are the offspring of degraded and ignorant parents; these sprigs from the tree of evil are allowed to grow in the midst of that moral cesspool from which they sprang, and are reared in conditions of ignorance and amid scenes of brutality and vice. What wonder that the seeds of stupidity and of iniquity, implanted within their young hearts ere they saw the light of day, flourish and germinate, bursting into external growth and assuming large proportions! What wonder that crime early marks so many of our youth and young people as its prey!

Humanity itself permits this terrible condition of evil, for in this enlightened age, when mankind understands the progressive tendency of life, and that total depravity is a monstrosity of the imagination of the past, when education and moral enlightenment may be diffused as widely as the universe, society neglects the wants of its most helpless and needy classes, and allows them to flounder in the mire of that ignorance that degrades them to a far lower level than that of the beasts of the forest. If, then, we arraign society with her laws, her principles, her powers, as unfaithful to her mission, unjust in her administration, and untrue in her profession, it is because we deeply feel that she is responsible for the sad condition of human error and folly that prevails in every large community; it is because, while claiming to protect and instruct her children, she is too prone to foster the pride, and to applaud the possessions of the higher advanced, and to neglect and ignore the needs and struggles of those who are low in the scale of intelligence.

This is all wrong. A system of social protection that will attend to the wants and satisfy the needs of *all* is what is demanded. While the higher classes of humanity are protected, the best interests of the lower should be carefully attended to. And this can be wisely accomplished. Let society rescue the miserable offspring of the degraded from their wretched surroundings, and place them under such an instructive discipline as will repress the brutal instincts of their nature and educate the higher faculties of intellect and of spirit, and you will, after a time, see no more hordes of criminals devastating our large cities, or passing out in their hopeless condition to the spirit world.

Love and instruction are the moving powers of moral regeneration in the spirit world. The same potent forces must be handled by those on earth who desire to purify humanity, and to bring the evil-minded into a condition of righteousness and peace.

You must provide knowledge for the mind, occupation for the hand, and sympathy for the hearts of those you wish to elevate. Let society establish ways and means by which the *children* of the lawless may be taken into *homes* where love is the ruling spirit, and where instruction in the practical principles of a sound education is provided; where branches of industry are taught, that each pupil may learn to become self-supporting and useful; and where moral excellence is inculcated in the heart of each child.

Let wise men and pure women who love humanity and are zealous in good works take charge of these institutions; let them not be known as "houses of reform" or as "industrial schools," but as *homes* of

affection and of happy usefulness; let the street waifs be brought under the influences of such associations as good music, elevating literature, gentle guardianship, cheerful companionship, and useful employment provide, and allow them to be brought into contact with none of the debasing conditions that attended their birth; and what, do you think, would be the result? Why, if this work was faithfully established and unerringly carried out each year with every child that appears in the slums of life, it would not be long before crime would be an unknown word in your vocabulary.

Those who had been born in iniquity would unfold as practical, intelligent, law-abiding members of humanity. The old and hardened offenders of purity and morality would *die off* and be attended to by a higher tribunal than that of earth. Society would find a recompense for her work in a state of security such as she has never known, and life on earth would blossom grandly forth in peace, prosperity and honor, such as we hope it may do in the golden ages yet to come.

Take care of the children! oh! ye wise ones who desire to know how humanity may be protected from the encroachments of evil. Look after the waifs stranded in your midst by the powers of iniquity. Faithfully guard the citadel of moral grandeur by *educating* those who would be reared in ignorance and corruption but for your timely protection. Strike at the root of the terrible wrong at once, by rescuing the young from the hands of crime and placing them where no thought of vice will creep into their hearts.

Your orphan asylums, your reformatory institutions for young people, your schools where the waifs of

humanity are sent, are not enough, are not established on the right principles. Their system of education and of reformation is not founded on *love*. Affection is not the ruling power that sways the heart of all who are there to guide and instruct.

What society needs, and what humanity demands, are *homes* for the helpless, places where the waifs shall be taken in infancy and the earliest years of life, where *love* will protect their interests, moral guidance unfold their spiritual natures, education admit them into the secrets of knowledge, and practical example teach them methods of industrious labor.

Some day we believe this work will be accomplished. Men of influence and of means, women of refinement and intelligence, whose hearts are throbbing with a desire to bless their kind, will turn their attention in this direction, and by exercising an influence upon society at large, by the example of their united or their individual labors, will induce her to join in the work that promises such a grand and noble result to humanity.

While we look to the education and care of the *children* as the grand power by which humanity is to be perfected, we by no means advocate the neglect of those who are merged in ignorance or hardened in sin. To such unfortunates we must extend what temporary assistance or enlightenment we feel may be of service in drawing them from their hapless condition; and it may be that we shall thus succeed in helping some poor soul upward to the light. The exercise of love is never wasted, the imparting of knowledge is never lost; these will strike and find soil sometime in which to grow and flourish. Therefore he who cultivates a love

for humanity and seeks to bless his fellow-men will find himself a happier man from the conviction that he is of use in the world.

Flowing out from the thought of universal education many ideas appear, and various methods for assisting in the scheme of instruction arise. And in connection with this work I wish to speak of the importance of the spiritual press. Great truths are constantly dropped by returning spirits into the hearts of men. The spiritual press, in taking these truths up and spreading them before the attention of the multitude, is fulfilling an ennobling mission. Humanity has too long been merged in the clouds of superstition and error concerning the purposes of being, the meaning of life, the uses of experience, the discipline of labor, the condition of future existence, and the circumstances, methods, and vital interests of immortal life. Spirits of intelligence, experience, and wisdom stand ready to reveal to mortals a knowledge of these great questions and issues of life. Let the spiritual press gather up, arrange, and send forth these truthful lessons, and it will perform a most important part in the education of humanity, and prepare a way in the hearts of its intelligent and influential readers to accept and advance a system of universal education that will especially be provided for and directed to the needs of the lowliest and most ignorant.

Whoever performs an individual part in this ennobling work, and becomes instrumental in scattering before the great ignorant public (who are yearning for a knowledge of immortality, of the uses of life, of the best means of obtaining human growth) those pearls of

wisdom and of truth which he receives from wise spiritual teachers; he who makes use of that great engine of power — the printing press — to give to his fellow-men, what the angels have brought to his life by way of instruction, of enlightenment, and of elevation, becomes a benefactor to his race, and assists in the grand scheme of instruction — spiritual, moral, industrial, and intellectual — that is yet to save humanity from all debasing conditions or degrading tendencies, and make of man a being “but little lower than the angels.”

NOTE. — In giving to the children of earth an idea of the experiences of erring souls, and a comprehension of the process of regeneration that the spiritual world provides for such unfortunates, it seems to me best that the truth should be taught you by a spirit who has known the experience of error, and its consequent suffering, and who, by the merits of her own endeavors has passed from darkness into light. For none can so graphically portray the experiences of a human heart as they who have undergone their discipline. Therefore I shall now introduce to you a spirit who, under the significant title, “Outside the Gates,” will confide to you a history of her own spiritual experiences from the hour of her passage from the body to the present time.

OUTSIDE THE GATES:

THE STORY OF A SPIRIT'S WOE.



CHAPTER I.

MY DEATH.

I AM a woman.

Not of mortal mold, as you who read these pages are; but one who has passed *through* the experiences of physical life, and has tested the reality of immortality.

I come to you to relate my story of sin and suffering and wrong, hoping that it will serve the purpose of deterring some tempted soul from swerving from the path of honor and rectitude. My mission is to show to mortals that every unrighteous thought, every dishonest act, every ignoble deed of their lives, writes itself in burning letters upon the soul, that will take many long years, many painful experiences, and many floods of bitter tears to efface.

The story of my spirit experience is made up of many sighs, of anguishing tears, of pain, of sorrow, and of remorse. Oh! that it may have some effect upon those who contemplate doing wrong, to lead them from the error of their thought, is my earnest prayer.

In the quiet of my silent chamber I felt the near approach of death. I had been prostrate for weeks with a low, distressing fever, that burned the blood in my veins and consumed the very breath that I inhaled; but at last the flames had subsided, only to be succeeded by a weary, deathlike faintness. Kind friends had watched beside me, loving hands had attended to my wants, and nothing that might be conducive to my comfort had been withheld.

But now I was alone. The nurse had lain down in the next apartment, leaving the midnight taper burning upon a stand by my bedside. I opened my eyes and gazed around upon the familiar pictures on the walls; on articles of furniture, and elegant little trifles such as women love, that had been given me by admiring friends. Ah! shall I ever forget that last look upon things grown dear to me through association? Suddenly a terrible sensation crept over me; a horrible, blank, *black* darkness — a dreadful NOTHING, in which I lost all sense of *what* and *who* and *where* I was. This was succeeded by a faintness and weakness, indescribable but intense. I felt myself sinking, sinking, *sinking*. I had no volition, no will; I did not wish to cry out; I felt it best to lie silent and grapple *alone* with *Death*.

Oh! the memory of those last moments on earth! how they burn in my heart like living flames! All the past rose up before me with vivid distinctness: I saw myself a child in my father's house, surrounded by a troop of brothers and sisters, myself a strange, silent one among them, the perplexity of my mother, the pride and darling of my father.

I will not here pause to relate all the past scenes and events that reappeared before me in that trial hour; some of them will be referred to as my narrative proceeds; others are buried beyond resurrection.

I knew that I was dying, and I also knew that I was not prepared to pass out from the mortal form. I had not made the best and the most of life. I had not always walked a strictly honest path. I had not so lived that all the world might look upon my secret life, and say, "She is perfectly honorable and pure-minded." I had never been unchaste — oh, no! Neither gold nor passion had ever tempted me to part with my womanly virtue, but I had not been altogether honest in my dealings with my fellow-creatures, and in the moment when the great veil of futurity was about to be lifted before me, I felt the lash of unavailing regret, that pierced me like a scorpion's sting.

I feared no angry God. I dreaded the torments of no fiery lake. I had been reared to reject the doctrine of vicarious atonement, and I had no belief in a judgment day. I was a Spiritualist, and I knew that the only accuser the soul will find is that of an offended conscience, — an outraged *selfhood*, — and this accuser I had been called upon to face.

I knew then as I know now, that the deeds of the body are reflected upon the soul, and that if we do what we know to be wrong we shall repent of it in tears and anguish.

I will not linger over that last hour on earth; it was one of struggle, of mental anguish, of keen and bitter sorrow. But at last it ended, and a sensation of dreamy quiet, of restful calm, followed the stormy whirlwind.

I felt myself drifting, — drifting like a loosened boat out upon an open sea, — drifting, drifting away, away, and then there was a shock, as though I had struck against something, and I knew no more.

When I opened my eyes I seemed to be in the midst of a sea of faces: to my confused vision they appeared to be all alike, but as my senses returned I discovered that they were the faces of men and women, and that some of them were more distinct and clearly defined than others. It took me a few moments to observe that many of these faces were familiar to me. I had known them in the distant past, had been associated with their bearers in some manner, but others were strange, and I could not recognize them.

The faces that seemed to be enveloped in a fleecy cloud were indistinct; their owners were not looking at me apparently, but at something below me. Other faces that I could see more plainly were also turned toward something I had not yet seen.

Suddenly I felt a thrill shoot through all the fibres of my being, producing a shock that quickened me into intense consciousness. As if a cloud had been lifted before me, I saw my surroundings. I was standing as if in mid-air in the center of the double parlors of my earthly dwelling; at my feet, resting upon trestles that were covered with a pall, stood a casket, — a casket almost buried in flowers, and containing the lifeless form of what I recognized to be *myself*. Oh! what a strange sensation passed through me as I gazed upon that clay-cold image pent up in that narrow case! Was that thing *I*? was it that which had lived, and loved, and sinned, and suffered? For a moment I felt

as if I should *suffocate*; but then the thought that *this* was *I*, that *this form* gazing down upon the marble counterpart was the real, living spirit, and that whatever of sorrow, or pain, or anguish I might henceforth know, I had gained *eternal life*, came to my relief, and stilled the throbbing of my heart.

The room was thronged with people, and theirs were the faces that had seemed most distinct to me. Some of them were near and dear to me: their faces wore a shade of sadness that I grieved to see; others were warm friends or passing acquaintances I had known, and others were unfamiliar to me.

Presently a low, silvery sound broke upon my hearing, and the thrilling words, "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," reached my inner senses, as they fell from the lips of a refined and beautiful woman who stood at the head of the casket. I listened with interest as the speaker proceeded to draw from her text lessons of hope and comfort to the mourners, and evidences of immortality for the one who had "laid down the garment of flesh before us."

I will not linger over this ceremony, so strange and so instructive to me; the services closed with the singing of that immortal hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," rendered by a choir of mixed voices, and the funeral *cortège* wended its way to the cemetery. I was drawn onward as if by an invisible chain, and once again, during that memorable ride, I felt the sense of suffocation, and the feeling that *I* was encased in that box swept over me:

it was only by a strong effort of will that I shook off the sensation and again breathed freely as I realized that I had conquered *Death*.

At the grave my dear ones stooped to kiss the marble brow so dear to them; and as one, the sensitive of our family, the sweet one whom I had shielded and tended with care, that no rude blasts should sweep over her delicate spirit, pressed her warm lips to the faded cheek, the pallid brow, and colorless lips of the image in the casket, I felt a shock as from an electric battery, that seemed to snap some invisible cord binding me to the lifeless body; a sense of freedom, of exultation, thrilled me, and I knew that the contact of my darling young sister with the clay-cold form had in some way severed the tie that bound me to it and had set me free.

I could write a *life* history from the heart experience of these few fleeting hours; but I have no time to linger over them. Mortals can never fully understand what comes to a spirit when it is born into the other life until they meet the change. Its experiences are not alike to all; to me they were varied, of mingled agony and joy, and left an impress on my soul that will endure for ages.

During the next few weeks I seemed to live at home with my dear ones who were still in the body; at times I did not realize that I had really changed my condition as much as appeared. I looked natural; I seemed to be much the same as I was before my illness; it was only when I heard the dear voices speaking of me as *gone*, — as one who was not there, — that I remembered they could not see nor hear me.

I was not altogether happy, nor was I miserable in

these days. Life flowed on more as a dream than a reality. I interested myself in the pursuits and pleasures of my friends, and I sought to make them understand my feelings toward them. Twice I gave a little manifestation of my presence to my family. My dainty sister Lilian, who was our medium, fell into a trance condition; and through her lips I spoke my words of greeting, of love, and of remembrance. But it was not, for some reason, permitted me to give much concerning my change. I could give no information of the spirit world; *I had not seen it*. I was reluctant to speak of myself; for a pain burned at my heart that would not die away, and that seemed to remain as a remnant of that sorrowful experience I had known, when the memories, the incidents, the transactions of my life rose up before me in my last moments on earth. So they said, "She is weak yet; she cannot give much now; but by and by she will tell us many things."

One day my mother and sister sat in the room that had been *mine*. They were looking over my belongings, and sorting out the little effects that had been dear to me. "This," my mother said, taking up an article of jewelry I had worn, "you must wear, Lily; I think she would like you to have it." That pleased me; and I became interested, as one after another piece of jewelry or *bric-à-brac* was examined and disposed of. But suddenly it dawned upon me that *no longer* would I be the same in that house that I had been. My personal possessions, containing my magnetism, were distributed and scattered. What had been my private apartment was to be changed in its furnishing, and occupied by another.

Would they put me out of their hearts and their lives in the same way? A great agony of fear overcame me at the thought, and I suffered a year of sorrow in a moment's time. I knew they would always *love* me; but the passing years would dim their sorrow and cause my image to gradually fade from their remembrance. They were Spiritualists, and would seek for interviews with me and be glad to give me greeting; but would I *always* be the same to them as now?

My thought was a selfish one; and I have since learned that it was a foolish one. *The human heart never forgets or ceases to love its own.* But I had loved *them so much*, had made sacrifices for them, had *violated* my conscience that they might be made more comfortable, that the thought they *might* shut me out from them was intolerable.

CHAPTER II.

A SPIRIT'S WOE.

FOR years mine had been an active life. The daughter of poor, hard-working parents, one of the eldest of a large flock of children, I had felt it my duty to do what I could to help out the family exchequer. My health had never been very robust, and I could not labor as long as I wished; therefore my earnings were for a long time but slender, yet by the prudent management of my mother they went a wonderfully long way, and did their part in keeping the wolf from the door.

After a while changes came to our family. Two of its members stepped out into fields of their own; one little one died, and it was through her loving influences that my sister Lilian's medial powers became unfolded, and our family were convinced of the truths of Spiritualism. Daisy, our five-years-old pet, had been the next youngest to Lily; and when the little one passed away she found her way back to her loved playmate, and soon succeeded in making her hear, and see, and know that she was there.

An opening came to me which seemed to promise an opportunity of carrying on a successful business, — one that would afford me means to apply to the wants and comforts of those I loved. I entered upon it with alacrity and enthusiasm, asking the *good* spirits to help me in my undertaking, and hoping the best results from my venture.

But alas! the results of my labor did not answer my expectations. I found that I could *not* succeed by a purely straightforward course; and a scheme occurred to me whereby I could sustain my business, be looked upon as a smart and successful woman of enterprise, and earn enough money to assist my dear ones in life and to comfortably support myself.

I did not yield to this temptation all at once; I wrestled with it day and night; I struggled against it for a while; the conflict wore upon me; friends said, "How ill you are looking"; parents remarked, "She must be attended to; she is not well"; but I only smiled at their fears, until with almost a breaking heart I succumbed to the temptation, and entered upon a path of systematic wrong-doing.

As I have said, I was *not* unchaste, but ever remained true to my womanly honor. The persuasions, the insinuations of impure men never fell upon my ear; and I should have turned from them with *scorn* if they had. I had no dealings in any shape with impure women or dishonorable men. My business was a legitimate one; I was not a female gambler, nor a stock speculator. I robbed no poor person of his or her hard-won earnings. I *pitied* the poor, and sought to help them when I could.

You will wonder *what* was my employment; I cannot tell its nature, nor shall I give you my real name, as there are those on earth I love who might recognize my story and be forever grieved by its tale of woe; you may call me "*Marah*," for I have drank deep at the well of bitterness. There are occupations upon which women may enter as well as men — occupations

that require brains, skilful management, and shrewd calculation to make them successful — occupations that are considered respectable in the eyes of the law, and endorsed by the patronage of the public. Such a business was mine on earth ; and if I had pursued it strictly in the line of honest dealing with my patrons, I should not have had the remorseful hours that have swept over me.

But in being true to myself I did not win the public favor ; I could not give my patrons all they demanded ; my capital stock was enough to rest upon, but I could not add to it without false representations and dishonest dealing, and in an evil hour I fell into such a path of dishonor.

I did not walk this path with a reckless or a contented mind ; often the desire came to me to be freed from all the trial and the temptation. Many times I resolved to rise above it, and to lay aside the business that robbed me of my peace of mind. More than once I contemplated the destruction of my life rather than to remain fettered by the chains of wrong-doing, but the thought of the anguish and the shame of my dear ones at such a deed restrained me. And so the years rolled on. I remained in my position, and continued at home with my parents and brothers and sisters. I had no desire to leave them ; the only man I had ever loved had died when I was in my twenty-first year. It was a heavy blow when he was taken from me ; he was my idol, my only love ; I could have died then, too. But no, I lived to a life of pain and repentance.

I told my perplexities and sorrows to no one. I would not have any friend share the secret of my sin,

and I bore it alone. I *knew* that the angels understood it all; whether they pitied me most or condemned, I could not tell.

During the years that I lived this life, one of my sisters married, and went to a home of her own. One brother had entered business life, and was able to provide something toward the family support, and another had entered a profession that called him from home for a time, but one that promised him on his return a lucrative position. Therefore the burden of the family needs rested less heavily upon me.

My father had never been a robust man, and the effects of an enfeebled condition began to wear upon him. Although one of the most tender of parents and considerate of men, he had the unfortunate habit of taking strong drink; and this curse had hung like a pall over his young family through all their lives. My mother, a noble, self-sacrificing woman, was one of the saints of the earth, and in every way possible sought to uplift and bless her husband, and comfort and instruct her children.

I have told you sufficiently of my earthly life for you to understand how unhappy the remembrance of its record must have made me after I passed from the body, and therefore I will not linger upon its history.

I continued to remain in my mother's home for some weeks after my physical decease, but as I have said, mine had been a busy life; and this inactivity of mind and body—for I was conscious of possessing a tangible, material-like body—soon became irksome to me. To listen to my mother's moans for her child, to my sisters' plans, or even to make myself known to them occasion-

ally, did not bring me contentment and satisfaction. I wanted something *to do*, but I could not get away out into the atmosphere where there was life and bustle and toil, nor even down to the office where I had spent my days in busy labor and dishonest practices. •

One day my mother seemed to grieve for me more intensely than ever. She had been dividing the locks of hair cut from my head between my sisters, reserving one chestnut tress for herself. "Don't grieve so, mamma," my sister Lily said to her; "it's wicked; she is happy now, and we ought not to wish her back. Darling sister! she was so good to everybody, the whole world loved her, I think. We feel that we can't spare her, but we must. She has gone to her reward for all her loveliness to us. She deserves all the glory and grandeur and joy that can come to her, and I know it is hers, she was so noble, so pure, and so unselfish."

Had a red-hot iron fallen upon me I could not have started more than I did at those words of my innocent sister. They pierced me like a dagger. *I happy now! I deserve* joy and grandeur and glory! *I noble, pure, and unselfish!* I, who had lived a *lie*, seeming to be what I was *not*; deceiving everybody with whom I associated! Oh, God! the remembrance of what I had done burned in my soul; I shrieked in agony; and covering my face with a corner of my robe, I with a mighty bound burst from the room and from the house.

I know not how long or how far I wandered; but presently I flung the cloth from my face and gazed around me. I panted with emotion, and felt as if I should suffocate. But that I knew however a *spirit*

might suffer it could not die, I should have thought an end of all things for me was at hand.

I was in a strange place, one that I had never visited before; around and over me the shadows gathered as if nightfall was fast approaching. The atmosphere, too, seemed charged with moisture, as if threatening rain. The place was barren; I saw no tree, nor shrub, nor house, nor human anywhere. All was desolate and deserted. I had longed to be alone; my thought on flying from the only home I had ever known was to get away from everybody and everything; and my desire was accomplished—in all the wide universe I was absolutely *alone*.

I sank down amazed and stunned. The solitude awed me; I wondered where I was. Had God forsaken me? and was I henceforth doomed to this desolation? But immediately a sense of the past rushed over me. Then I was not alone; the atmosphere seemed thronged with accusers, whose voices rang out loud and clear. I knew they were but my thoughts speaking in avenging tones of the wrongs I had done, telling me what I had always known, that it was far worse for *me* to commit sin than for one who was ignorant of the laws of right and the penalty of their transgression, for I had been taught of the sure effects that follow the deeds of a human life. But although they were only my thoughts speaking, they were as audible to me as the shouting of human voices could be. I knew that, struggle as I might, I could never get away from myself, and therefore I should never be alone. In the midst of a desert my conscience would keep me company; and I might as well be surrounded by

multitudes of humans as to be crowded by the memories and the voices of the past.

I sank into a semi-unconscious condition, from which I aroused after a while, only to find that the darkness had now become a gray, vaporish twilight, in which I could see the forms of men and women moving to and fro. The faces of some were sad and averted, as if care and pain filled their hearts. Others appeared bold and defiant, and others again showed only traces of careless merriment and indifference. As I started up I noticed that the garments of all these people were gray or dun color, or black. I glanced at my own robes and discovered them of sombre hue. I gathered their dusky folds around me so that my features should not be seen, for though I wished to know what manner of place this was, I had no desire to be observed or recognized.

Still, I saw no traces of vegetation or of human habitation. This seemed to be a broad belt of—*what?* hardly land, for I saw and felt no earth, although my feet rested firmly on something which, when I looked at them, appeared to be a mass of gray vapor; a part of the universe, certainly, but *what* I could not tell.

Below, and not very far from this place, I saw what I knew must be your earth, and as I gazed my vision became clearer, and I recognized the spires and domes of the city where I had lived, and soon its streets and its homes, and at length the very house in which my parents dwelt. I was not so very far from home, then, after all;—but what was *this* slightly beyond and above me that gleamed so beautifully through the shadows?

As I turned and gazed in this direction I began to

perceive that the brightness beyond extended like a wall of light as far as the eye could see. It was not of solid substance, but appeared ethereal, like the billowy clouds of a brilliant sunset, and glowed and scintillated with the lovely tints of the rainbow.

Soon it dawned upon me where I was: in the borderland between the spiritual and the material worlds. I, a spirit, with earthly conditions, could neither dwell on earth nor in heaven. *What a thought!* And then I knew that yonder belt of light was the wonderful gate to the heavenly life, and I, though banished from the mortal state, was still *outside the gates!*

CHAPTER III.

THE PENITENT.

OUTSIDE THE GATES! How the conviction settled like a weight of gloom upon my spirit! Below was the material, with its toils, its struggles, and its conflicts: here was a dead, blank desert, with nothing to enliven or to quicken one's being. *There* was light and peace and happiness and *heavenly rest*. There, beyond that wall of beauty, lived my idol, the dear one whom in all my dark hours I had never forgotten. There, too, was my pure-hearted little Daisy, and other dear ones whom I had mourned when they slipped from their earthly hold.

And I could not get to them: I was debarred a sight of their sweet faces, and of the heavenly land; and although my heart famished for the sight, I could find no entrance-way into the glorious angel world. In my grief I madly questioned *why* I could not find my darlings and be at peace; and one of the voices of my soul answered: "Never, until you regain your *self-respect*, can you find the heavenly way, or gaze upon the faces of the immortals who live in purity and peace."

I bowed my head in submission, and paced to and fro, as near to the belt of light as I could get. I gave no thought, no notice, to any of my fellow-travellers. If curious glances fell upon me I knew it not. With bent head and lowered gaze, my black garments trailing behind me, and busy with my own remorseful thoughts, I

passed on, and recognized neither the surrounding faces nor the lapse of time.

I know now that a human soul can endure an eternity of experience in an hour's anguish. Not that I was but a brief hour in my woe, but that I have seen spirits suffer so, that it would seem as if ages had passed over them in an instant of time. Oh! *what* should I do? What *would* give me back the fresh innocence of heart that was mine before I entered upon my path of sin?

These were the questions I demanded of myself; how could I get beyond those sunrise gates? I could never return to earth and reveal my suffering and my wrongdoing to the dear ones there. What! torture their hearts with a knowledge of how I had deceived them? *Never!* though tēn thousand torments awaited me.

In the midst of my terrible cogitations I heard a sound, and a voice above me said: "You will find relief in *work*. Work for your fellow beings. There are those all around you who need your counsel and your sympathy. Speak to them encouragingly; it will strengthen you. Go back to earth and tell your story; it will deter others from doing wrong. Oh! forget self in ministering to others, and you will regain all that you deem is lost."

Like the sound of an Æolian harp the words fell in silvery accents on my soul, and, looking upward, I caught a glimpse of a radiant face beaming upon me through the wall of light; but, as it vanished, the clouds again gathered over me, and I wrapped the sombre folds of my robe around my head and passed onward, more unhappy than before.

I now know that I was in this unhappy condition for

months, though to me then it seemed as though eternal ages were rolling over me. I continued on my way, wrapped up in my woe, until at length I began to notice the import of a sound that had for some time fallen unheeded on my ear, and discovered it to be the low, moaning, sobbing cry of a woman's voice. As I began to comprehend the sorrow of the tone, a feeling of pity came over me. Was it possible that any one could be as unhappy as I?

I threw aside the veil from my face and looked around, and there, pacing to and fro like myself, I beheld a young and beautiful woman, who was sobbing as if her soul would rend in two. In her arms she held a chubby, dimpled child, over which she bowed in her agony of tears. Good heavens! I thought, a child, an innocent cherub from heaven, in this forlorn and gloomy spot! What can it mean? I approached the girl — for she could not have been more than twenty — and touched her on the arm. She shrank away from me, but I would not let her fly.

"Do not be alarmed," I said; "I am a sister in misfortune. I will not harm you; perhaps I may do you good."

"Oh! who are you?" she sobbed, turning her tear-stained face toward mine. "You speak kindly, but you cannot help me; no one can do that. I have my punishment to bear alone. Please leave me. I want no one."

"I am one like you who has suffered deeply," was my answer. "I may be powerless to aid you in any outward manner, but I can give you my sympathy. Come, tell me your trouble; it will relieve you to

confide in some one who is friendly, and I can at least be that."

She hesitated a moment, and then, as if the prospect of sharing her sorrows with another was pleasing to her, she pressed her child more closely to her bosom and began to relate, in a hurried and tearful voice, her tale of woe. The little one in her arms cooed softly, and nestled to his mother's heart in innocent love and confidence that was beautiful to behold.

By dint of gentle persuasion and sympathetic assurances of my interest in her and her infant, I succeeded in winning the whole story of her life from the unhappy girl. Every now and then she would break down in pitiful sobs that for a time choked her utterance; but she would soon grow calm again, and continue her narrative.

Thus I learned that she had been the idolized child of a poor but refined widow, whose husband had died about three years after their marriage, leaving her this daughter, a child of two years. By careful application to her profession as a music and vocal teacher, the lady had succeeded in providing for the wants of herself and child, and in rearing the latter in refinement and culture.

"I never wanted for anything mamma could get me," said the weeping girl. "She gave me the best advantages of a liberal education the place afforded. She denied herself the luxuries of life, that I might go into society as well informed and as handsomely dressed as the daughters of our more wealthy neighbors. She loved me devotedly, and I repaid her devotion with unfilial ingratitude."

“My mother was the organist of our Unitarian society,” she continued, after a fresh paroxysm of tears, “and under her tuition I became sufficiently proficient in vocal music to be considered a fit candidate for the position of first soprano in the choir. Our tenor was a handsome man, about thirty years old, when I first met him about two years ago. His black hair and beard, his dark eyes and rosy cheeks, his straight form and superb bearing had won the admiration of all the members of our congregation, while his divine singing made him almost worshiped by my mother and myself.”

The girl went on to relate that it soon became the custom of this Adonis to visit her home several times a week, for the purpose of practicing singing with herself and her mother, the latter possessing a rich contralto voice, that gave depth and harmony of tone to the mellow sweetness of the others. And it soon became quite the thing for these two ladies to await the coming of the dashing tenor with impatience and eagerness.

But why dwell upon the story? Little by little the intimacy of the young people advanced, until the dreadful truth dawned upon the girl that she was soon to assume the cares and responsibilities of maternity. With blanched cheeks and paling brow she sought an interview with her lover, imparting to him her secret, and imploring him to make restitution to her honor. He soothed her anxiety with gentle caresses and promises of an immediate union; but the next day it transpired that he had left the city for parts unknown.

Wrought up to frenzy by the knowledge of her shame and her lover's baseness, she gathered up her jewels and the little money she had in her possession, and fled from

her home. After travelling in an unknown direction as fast as steam would bear her for three days, she was set down at a country station, and left alone and desolate in the world.

I cannot tell you what experiences the poor girl passed through during the next six months; it requires the thrilling pathos of her voice to adequately convey a realization of their suffering and their depth. The knowledge she possessed of music had enabled her to earn a comfortable living until her child was born,—a precious little boy, with curling black hair and dusky eyes. Then her strength failed her; the small savings of a few months were soon exhausted; then she sold her jewelry, and at length, faint and weary, she found herself penniless and deserted.

“My punishment was just,” she moaned; “I deceived my mother; I may have killed her by my actions; she never could have held up her head again after my disgrace. Poor mamma! she was so proud of her Lettie!”

Driven to despair, the poor girl at length procured writing materials, and penned a long letter to her mother, confessing all her fault, and praying for forgiveness. This she gave to a woman in the town who had shown her some kindness after her misfortune had become known, with the request that she should mail it to the address on the envelope.

“That night I started for the river with my baby in my arms,” she said. “I clasped him close, and with a prayer for pardon I plunged in. After a few moments of agony I lost consciousness, and when I opened my eyes I found myself *here!*” and with a gesture of

despair she swept her hand around in the gloom of the place.

"And why *should* you be here?" I demanded. "You have been more sinned against than sinning. Is there a just God to permit such things? Why is not the villain who caused your misery here, or in some more unhappy place, instead of you, my poor child?"

"Hush!" she cried; "you must not upbraid him; he is my darling; I love him still, and to save him such suffering as I have known, I would walk with bared feet over red-hot stones to warn him to flee from danger. If I had repented of my sin, so as to be strong to live until God *called* me, it might have been different; but I allowed despair to govern me, and I took my life, and robbed my innocent child of his. I can never forget it; and sometimes when it seems as though I could get away from here to a more congenial place, the thought of what I have done arises and confronts me, and I sink down helpless and condemned. I am not fit to live in a holier place than this. But it is so fearful! Those who are here seem so dark and unhappy, or else so coarse and careless, they frighten me. But worse than all is the thought that my child must be in such scenes, instead of in heaven where he belongs."

The child, as if understanding his mother's sad plaint, lifted his tiny hand and caressed her cheek, and with a satisfied smile nestled still closer in her bosom. Ah! poor woman! little did she realize then that the prattling infant found *its heaven* in the loving arms that enfolded it.

"If I could only get to my mother!" Lettie wailed,

"I am sure I could win her forgiveness. Through all the woe of my life I feel she is calling me. She spends her days in anguish, her nights in tears; she can find no rest, I am sure. Her head is bowed to the dust, and I have caused her all this pain. Oh! if I could reach her!"

Then I knew my work had come: it was to teach this child the possibility of spirit communion with earth, the power of spirit return and control over matter; and with gentle words I drew her to my arms and related the wonderful story of how hapless or happy spirits could find their way back to earthly scenes, and, under certain laws, demonstrate their presence to their mourning friends.

She listened in wild-eyed excitement and eager breathlessness. "Come," said I, "we will go; I know the way; we *will* leave this place. *Think* of your mother and her home, and we will soon be there." Fixing our thoughts upon the place we desired to reach, we felt ourselves rising and floating out into the atmosphere. In a few moments I saw we were in an apartment that belonged to an earthly dwelling. It was furnished neatly, and with evident refinement.

In its centre, by the side of a table covered with books, sat a lady with bowed head and clasped hands, the picture of grief and desolation. She was evidently not more than forty years of age, and bore traces of great beauty, which, however, had been dimmed by the lines of suffering that shadowed it. I could see at a glance that here was Lettie's mother; for the resemblance between them was too great to be mistaken.

With a great cry my companion started from my side and flung herself at the feet of the drooping figure. I caught the child from her arms, and, with him clasped to my breast, stood a sympathetic spectator of the scene. As the spirit clasped the feet of the mortal, a shudder swept through the frame of the latter and a cry of pain escaped her ; she raised her head and glanced wildly around the apartment.

A soft, sweet influence filled the room. I felt it thrilling every fibre of my being. As the lady continued to gaze and the kneeling spirit to cling to her skirts, I saw a beautiful, soft, mellow light gradually steal through the dusk of the winter twilight and fill the room with an indescribable glory. In the centre of the apartment a human form became outlined, and in a moment I perceived the form and features of a handsome, stately male spirit, whose hands were raised in blessing above the heads of the two women.

The imploring, penitent spirit still knelt at the feet of her mortal parent, her whole form bowed in an agony of love and supplication. The elder woman still continued to gaze in questioning awe around the apartment ; and I stood transfixed, with the babe clasped tightly to my bosom. As I watched the scene before me, I felt a strange withdrawal of power from my person ; it was as though all the strength of my being was taken from me by the only mortal occupant of the place ; and presently it became evident that she recognized the glory of the scene, and perceived the male form appearing in the midst, for she started up with a glad cry, and, pale and trembling, with outstretched hands and throbbing voice, articulated, "George!

George! have you come back from heaven to comfort me! Oh! my God, I thank thee!"

With a smile of ineffable sweetness the spirit beckoned to the excited woman; but she neither moved nor spoke again, only stood gazing, gazing upon the marvelous vision, with a world of love in her eyes. Turning to the kneeling figure at her feet, the man made a slight movement; and as if drawn by invisible cords, the girl swiftly moved to his side, and stood folded in his loving embrace; turning toward me, he gave me a look, which, understanding, I obeyed by moving forward, and placing the child on his arm. I moved back, and continued to watch the scene with unabated interest. What a family group! The wife and mother, sad and sorrowful, clad in mourning robes, the only mortal present, gazing upon a spiritual scene wherein she beheld the husband, long mourned as dead, standing before her, with one arm embracing the erring but repentant daughter she had lost, and the other sustaining the innocent child whose relationship to herself she instinctively recognized.

For awhile she gazed, but soon, overcome by her emotions, she sank into her chair, faint and exhausted. The scene faded from her sight, and again she seemed to be alone with her own thoughts and the memories of the past. But not alone, for the spirits who had gathered so strangely under this roof remained with the lonely woman until the morning light streamed within her unshuttered windows.

During all the hours of the night we watched beside her; she was held in a semi-magnetic condition by the powerful influence of her spirit husband. Happy, peace-

ful thoughts floated through her breast, and a quiet, restful feeling took possession of her frame. From the elder spirit I learned that he had been the guardian of his wife and child for years; that he had watched over his daughter in her peril, and that although powerless to rescue her from it, yet he had continued to attend her through all her sad experience, unseen and unknown by her; and that henceforth he would be able to aid her in attempting and performing good work for humanity.

“And,” said he, “to you, dear lady, am I indebted for much that has occurred this night. It was you who gave such sympathy and love to my child as to induce her to open her heart to you. Had I approached her, she would have shrunk back affrighted, but to you, a sister in sorrow, she could relieve her mind. It was you who taught her of spirit return, and conducted her over the way to her mother’s home. And it was your mediumistic developing power that, flowing from your organism to hers, enabled my beloved wife to behold and recognize her lost family as once more restored to her. Through the good you have accomplished this night, great results will flow to others; for the mediumship here unfolded will expand and develop into a useful, beneficent power. Whatever may have been your sorrow or your sin, *dear* soul, I do not know, but in this one night’s deed of unselfish love you have atoned for all.”

As he spoke, a mingled feeling of pain, of humility, and of surprise filled my being, pain at the remembrance of who I was, humility that I should be thus commended by one so benignant and bright, and surprise that my

little act of disinterested attention to a suffering fellow spirit had produced such results.

As the early morning light gilded the eastern sky, I bade farewell to my companions, and glided from the place. I felt that my mission here was at an end; and so I left them still attending the now awakened wife and mother, who seemed imbued with new life and energy as she aroused to her daily duties. Whither should I turn my face? was the question in my mind. Should I go to my former earthly home, and again take up my abode with those I loved? No! they did not need me now, and there was nothing for me to do there. I would return to that mysterious border whence I had come, for that was evidently my home.

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITS IN DARKNESS.

AGAIN I found myself *outside* the heavenly walls that glowed before me with a richer beauty and a clearer light than they had done before; the atmosphere around me seemed a little less heavy and dense than it had been in my former sojourn here, and I breathed with greater ease; a feeling of — not exactly peace or content, but something less despairing than my former frame of mind, possessed me, and I observed that my robes, that before seemed of a funereal black, now appeared of a dark blue color. Still I drew their folds around me, for I was not yet prepared to expose my features to my fellow travellers, nor to take a general interest in their welfare. The sight of the golden gates again drew my heart toward their portals, and a great sorrow that I was unworthy to enter the land that lieth beyond filled my being.

Thus again I paced to and fro with bowed head and heavy heart; but now I would occasionally look up and glance at those who hurried by me or who sat around in gloomy postures, or despairing or abandoned attitudes; for since my experience with Lettie I could never again be altogether indifferent to the sorrows of my fellow creatures.

At length I was drawn to a solitary, hard-visaged young woman, who constantly remained in one place, and crouched low as if to bury herself from sight.

Usually her features wore a defiant, reckless expression that forbade all approach; but once or twice I observed a softer shade sweep over them, as though love, or repentance, or some *spiritual* emotion was working in her breast. Finally, moved by her utterly forlorn and hopeless aspect, I resolved to try and draw her into conversation, and approached her for that purpose. Her entire appearance was so utterly repelling and forbidding, as she confronted me, that I shrank back appalled, and, contenting myself by simply saying, "My poor woman, I pity you! if I can help you, let me know, for I, too, am one who suffers and knows how to sympathize with others," — left her again to herself.

But having once spoken to the poor creature, I could not rest without again attempting to offer her consolation, and, after many rebuffs and failures to elicit anything from her, she finally broke down into moans and wails of distress, and, crouching at my feet like a wounded animal, revealed to me her tale of woe.

Never shall I forget the shock of horror, of pain and fear that went over me as I listened to the terrible story. I *cannot* relate it to you in all its horrors. This creature had been an abandoned woman of the streets. For years she had lived a life of shame, and even worse than bartering her own womanhood in passion or for gold, she had been instrumental in inducing other women to part with their virtue and self-respect. A life of horror and misery passed, until one day she was confronted by the jealous fury of one to whom she had promised to be faithful, and before she had time to defend herself or to offer a word of explanation, he felled her to the floor and fled from the scene. The

woman lingered in the body for a week, and then her struggling spirit was released from its prison of pain. The man was arrested, and had been tried and convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

This was the substance of that dreadful tale, from which I shrank as its recital fell upon my soul like a burning flame that scorched and withered me. But the poor woman continued: "I have been a *vile, vile* creature, cursed by God and man, and hated by the very ones who clustered round me; but there were times when I wanted to do right and tried to be good, but I *couldn't* do it. Once I went to a strange place and tried to get honest work; but the people looked at me with suspicion, and no one would employ me — and then I *cursed them* all, and returned to the only means I had of earning my bread. I was not always the bad thing you see me; I was once a fair, gay-hearted girl; they flattered and spoiled me at home till my head was turned, and when a young fellow asked me to run away with him and get married, I went. He did not give me a wedding ring, but he robbed me of my honor and then deserted me. I went home, but my father said I was no child of his, and my mother was dead, and so I turned away to the vile life of the streets. Don't think I am all bad," she moaned, lifting her heavy eyes to mine; "I was true to Jack; such as I was, I was all his after I came to love him. I would go to him now if I could find him. I clung close to him all through the trial, and if they had hanged him I should have cursed them. But they took him away, and somehow I lost him and got here. I *love him*, and I want to

find him; he must be lonesome: help me to go to him."

The woman clung to me in desperate supplication; all the fear and horror vanished from my heart, and a feeling of great compassion seized me. She had been wicked, and vile, and degraded, but she was a human creature. Was she not worth helping? She had once been innocent, and pure, and sweet. Could I help her to find her lost purity and draw her to a realization of a better life? Heaven helping me, I would do what I could.

I will not pause to tell you how I labored. I know now that an inspiration and an assistance from higher sources guided me on. Once we both caught a glimpse of a sweet, mild countenance beaming upon us through the shadows, but she cried in terror, "That is my mother; take her away! take her away! don't let her see me like this!" and it vanished.

I told her of the truths I had learned from angelic visitors through my medium sister on earth; of the purposes of life, of how each should strive, in repenting of any past sin, to atone for it by trying to think holier thoughts, do better work, and to believe kindly things of all people. I gave her brief lessons at first; I showed her that I sympathized with her, and pitied her sad condition, and taught her that if *I* believed in her power to become purer and happier, how much greater faith and love must the angels have. She understood me; she knew I was not selfish in my desire to lighten her sorrows. She clung to me, and gave me a kind of dumb devotion, very touching to witness. "Only help me to get to Jack," she would say, "and I will go any-

where or do anything to show my gratitude, or to help any other poor thing like myself!"

But first we found that she must do other work, and she began to manifest a desire to hunt up some of the poor girls who had occupied her den of iniquity on earth, and to help them. I accompanied her in her quest, and in three instances, by our united will and influence, we succeeded in turning erring human souls into paths of rectitude and right-doing. When the third effort to save a fellow creature had been successfully made, I said to her, "I think now we can find Jack," and in a little while we did so, found him the lonely occupant of a stone cell; and in the still hours of the night calling upon the name of her whose life he had destroyed, crying, "Kate! Kate! I was mad to do it! for God's sake come and help me out of this cursed place."

For awhile I tarried; long enough to see Kate fling herself by the side of the criminal with a great cry of love and tenderness, a cry that revealed the depths of her heart to be still womanly, and loving, and warm; long enough to know that, through the ministrations of this spirit and by the teachings of a lovely woman who weekly visited the prisoner in his cell — a woman sent to the jail by a liberal Unitarian society, to take a flower and a kindly word to the imprisoned human beings there — a work of regeneration would be wrought in the heart of that rough and sinful man that would develop its first impulses of goodness.

Then I turned to go. My charge drew near and whispered, "*God* bless you! you have given me faith in *Him* and love for my fellow creatures. From the

moment when you first spoke so pityingly to me and said you was a sufferer, too, and could sympathize with such as *me*, I loved you; I longed to confide in you then, but could not till afterwards. God bless you forever!"

I gave her a parting embrace — why should I not? was she not my sister woman, and was she not nobly redeeming the errors of the past? — and departed with a feeling akin to peace in my heart that had not for a long while dwelt upon its own sorrows; and constantly the words rang through my soul, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the *least* of these my children, ye have done it unto me!" How sweet and holy they sounded, and how beautiful their application to the blessing called down upon me by my repentant friend!

I thought, "I will go to the sorrowful country again, but I will not grieve hopelessly over the past; I will strive to help others who are in woe; I may even find a blessing *outside the gates*."

Once more I found myself in the old place; but again the golden bars gleamed brighter in the clear beyond; the air grew less heavy, and now I could see further into the haze that wrapped its folds over all the place. Glancing down, as I moved along, I discovered a tiny flower occasionally appearing at my feet. "Ah!" I thought, "this is not such a gloomy spot after all. The darkness seems to be more within ourselves than in our surroundings." I glanced at my garments; they had assumed the appearance of a dark gray, and were fresher and brighter than before.

Now I took a genuine interest in those around me, and as I approached them I found that I could read

their condition and their sorrows, and that I had no need to ask an utterance of them. One woman had lived a life of deceptive practices; after winning her confidence I revealed my history to her, and showed her how I had found relief and comfort, and bade her do likewise, by taking interest in her fellow sufferers. Another was wrapped in such a contemplation of her own pride and what she considered to be her virtues — but what appeared to me as follies — that I could make no impression on her. One man had been respected and loved by his earthly family and friends, but he had been a defaulter to a large amount in the establishment in which he was employed, and when his crime was discovered he took his own life. Here in the spirit world he was fully alive to his wrong-doing, and his soul was wrung in torture. The knowledge of the ignominy he had brought upon his innocent family lashed him into frenzy. I pitied him from the depths of my heart, and for a long time sought in vain to win his attention. At length he gave it to me with an air of sufferance; but as I proceeded to talk to him — inspired as I believe by some good angel — he grew interested and even animated; and when I closed by advising him to confess his error and his pain to those he had wronged, and to send a private message of love and contrition to his wife and children, he consented to do so if I would show him how.

This work was successfully performed. We found a pure-minded medium, a woman in private life, who gladly received the humiliated spirit and sent his communications to those for whom they were intended. Weak and humbled, but with a lightened heart, the

sorrowing man sought his former home, and avowed to me his purpose of working constantly to bless those he had wronged.

In the border land "outside the gates" I have seen the defiant brawler, the reckless gambler, and the bold and lawless woman of shame; those who still hold their old hardihood are not yet prepared for spiritual ministrations; they are neither teachable nor tractable; but many from all depths of former debasement are ready to be operated upon by higher influences, as their contrite, repentant attitude attests, and they are promptly attended to by invisible but constant protectors and guides.

On my return from that visit to the lovely medium with my new-found charge, I met in the twilight of earth the figure of a female whose face was buried on her arm, and who stood with her back toward me. Her whole attitude was one of shame and despair. I approached, and laying my hand on her arm, whispered, "I am a friend; let me share your sorrow; perhaps I can help you to find peace." She trembled, and shrank from my touch, but did not lift her head.

Again I essayed to draw her toward me, but without success. I could see the agitation of her mind, and read her interior condition.

"Come, my friend," I repeated, "let me share your burden. You are sad because of past errors. You feel that you were unfaithful to a holy mission; that yours was a high calling, and you were not equal to its fulfilment. You now mourn because you prostituted sacred gifts to base ends. Do not shrink from me; I do not condemn you; a higher judge than I must alone bring

you judgment. I pity, and would help you. Give me your confidence."

At my words the woman raised her face, and fastened a penetrating gaze upon me, as if to read my sincerity. She must have been satisfied, for she demanded, "Do you know who and what I am?"

Assuring her that I had never seen or heard of her before, she continued: "You have truly stated my condition of mind. It is two years since I left the body, and I am still restless and miserable. I linger here or around my old home, but with no thought but the everlasting regret that fills my soul over the life of the past. You look like one who has suffered; I will tell you of my past. Do you know what it is to be a medium?"

She hurled the question at me as though it had been a ball from a cannon, so short and sharp and swift were her words.

"I know something of the trials and the conditions of mediumship," I softly answered. "I have had mediumistic powers myself, and I have a loved sister on earth who is a mouthpiece for the angels."

"God grant that she may ever be kept a pure instrument for angelic power, and be saved from the temptations and snares that sometimes beset such as she," ejaculated my companion. "If you are acquainted with the laws of mediumship, perhaps you know something of the influences and the conditions that sway its subjects; acted upon by unseen intelligences, they become very susceptible and sensitive, and are open to the control of the influences who come about them. I was a medium on earth — one well known in a certain quarter; I was sought by all classes of persons, who through

interest or anxiety or curiosity wished to learn something of the invisible world through my occult powers.

"For some years I successfully practiced my profession as a reliable and honest medium for the spirit world; but after awhile I found my powers failing; I could not always receive intelligence from my controls when I most needed it. I was told by other mediums that my development was changing, and that soon I would become a medium of remarkable power. Ah! then the temptation fell upon me to supplement my genuine gifts with fraudulent practices. I let it become known that I was developing wonderful powers, and in a little while I opened my house to the surging public.

"I cannot repeat all the miserable artifices I used to deceive those who came to me for light — for light! oh, my God! and I gave them darkness and deception! I coined money, I made many friends, who, had they known me as I was, would have scorned me.

"But I parted with my self-respect; I lost the dear spirit friends who had formerly guided me; I failed in health, and at last I passed from the body.

"You do not know how I suffered; how I longed to be free from the fetters I had myself forged; how I loathed the deceiving influences who helped me to go on in my evil course, and whom I had *myself by my own folly* drawn around me. It did not make me happy to see my friends deceived; I was not without conscience, and the terrible weight on my mind sent me untimely from the body."

She paused in her recital, but I encouraged her to proceed, knowing that the effort would relieve her sorrows. "Since then," she continued, "I have wandered aim-

lessly back and forth, regretting my past mistakes and doing no good. Twice I have seen the sweet little innocent who was my messenger spirit in days past; but I could not bear to look at her, and I turned away. Oh! how I have longed to throw myself at the feet of all mediums and shriek in their ears, 'For God's sake *be true to yourselves!* For your own future peace of mind *give nothing in the name of the spirit world that does not emanate from its inhabitants!* *Be faithful to your holy work!*' And oh! that all would heed my words. I know not any who are impure or dishonest; all may be true, for aught I know. I was unfaithful to *my* gifts, and I am wretched!"

She ended with a wail of woe. Then, ah! then, *how* I talked to her, how I implored her to *work* for the atonement of her sin; how I pleaded to take her to a true-hearted medium whom I knew, through whose instrumentality she might work a redeeming power for souls in bondage.

At length she consented to accompany me; and with her I retraced my way to the medium whom I had visited before. To this medium my companion repeated her unhappy tale; she was received kindly, and gently invited to come again. Not to enlarge, I will simply say that this unhappy spirit became a constant visitor to that beautiful medium, through whose ministrations of love she gained magnetic strength to begin a new work for humanity.

After a period of trial she became a "cabinet spirit" for a genuine and noble-hearted medium, whose materializing powers were grandly employed by a wise band of intelligences for demonstrating the truths of immortality

to eager humanity ; and in aiding inexperienced spirits to manifest to friends, in giving loving messages for those spirits who could not express themselves, and in speaking words of counsel and admonition to those who come to her for instruction, she is performing a grand work, and is nobly atoning for the mistakes and errors of her earthly career.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHILDREN'S VALLEY.

NOW, when I traversed the pathways of that belt of space where unhappy spirits mingle, I did not feel depressed, nor was my entire being wrapped in its former clouds of misery. I could breathe freely and see clearly in the gentle light that floated around me; others like myself moved to and fro, thinking and working more for their unfortunate neighbors than for themselves; but still I could see that all who were unrepentant, or who, contrite, were yet wrapped in *themselves*, were enveloped in the clouds and gloom that once settled in dusky folds around me.

My robes had now become a soft dove-color, and clung around me in pleasing folds. I walked with firm but elastic step, and my whole being felt buoyant, as if the task of helping others had given *me* new life and vigor. Not but that I sometimes thought of the past and its errors; but though I always regretted them, they had ceased to absorb my entire thought and being to the exclusion of all the interests and sorrows of others.

On one occasion I, with another spirit whom I had learned to love as a benevolent worker among the unfortunate—one who was a teacher from a higher sphere and who came here to instruct and to guide the lowly—was attracted to the side of a rough and violent spirit whose terrible condition had excited our sympathy and compassion.

At a glance we learned his secret. He had been reared on earth amid scenes of lawlessness and vice; had lived a brutal existence, had taken human life, and had at length ended his career on the scaffold. Now he had aroused to a sense of his unhappy condition, and by the rays of magnetic light *we* could see streaming upon his head — but which were invisible to him — we knew that the awakening of conscience had been produced by unseen but wise intelligences.

My co-worker and I sought to assuage the dreadful pain by which he was assailed, but with glowering brows and muttered curses he turned away from us. Then I beheld standing beside me, in a mist of golden light, two male forms, whose faces shone with benevolence, and whose eyes beamed with love.

I had seen one or the other of these forms many times before, moving about with compassionate and benignant mien among the unfortunate, to whom they imparted lessons of instruction or lines of magnetic strength. But I had never been blessed by their company, nor had I hitherto been privileged to meet them together.

The larger — shall I say more massive of the two? for that would express my meaning — said to me, “Child, you have done well! you have accomplished a great work in aiding and teaching unhappy souls to find their *true selves* and to redeem their lives. But leave this unfortunate man to our care; he is too positive, too rebellious, for your work. We shall know how to deal with him, and to guide him to a condition of tranquillity. He is safe in our keeping. But you, my dear child, have long labored among these unpleasant

scenes," he continued, smiling upon me with a heavenly smile — such a smile as that dear teacher has! it seems as if the floodgates of light were opened when it breaks around his lips, and his whole grand face becomes illuminated by it! Ah! that smile has given hope and courage and faith to many a despairing spirit — "are you not weary of your work?"

"Oh! no, sir," I eagerly replied, "it grows more inspiring, and pleasing, and grateful to me daily. I should be very unhappy without it."

"Well said, my dear child; you have learned the secret of a useful life: doing unto others, you find your reward in your work. But while I attend to our unfortunate here, my friend will speak with you. I leave this little one in your hands, father, for a moment."

As he turned, his companion, who was scarcely older than he, but slighter in form, and more willowy in appearance, beamed upon me.

"Daughter," he said, "you must learn to know me, and to call me 'father'; on earth I was simply John Pierpont; here I am Father to all my flock; my friend here, who is himself a grand protector and guide, and who addresses me by the title of paternity — not that I am wiser or better than he, but because he loves me — you shall know as 'Benefice,' a beneficent teacher and friend of humanity.

"Now, my daughter, we have often watched your labors, and have commended your untiring zeal to bless others, but this is not a congenial place for you. Beyond that mountain that rises in the distance there is a charming valley. In that spot are beautiful little homes, presided over by gentle women and wise men.

There are to be found all things that delight the unfolding perceptions of childhood, all things that appeal to the love of the beautiful, the good, and the true. There is a vacancy there in one of those homes; it is a lovely abode, adorned with flowers, and filled with all that charms a woman's heart. The former mistress and preceptress of that home has been summoned to new duties and other labors. Three sweet children await a guiding hand and a teacher's love. Will you fill the place?"

My heart bounded with joy at the prospect opening before me at his words. I chosen to fill such a position, and to occupy such a home as my companion described! oh, how beautiful! I gave a glad assent, but words could not express my gratitude.

"You can set out at once; your friend knows well the place, and will guide you to it. God bless you in your new life! I will now attend to the work of Benefice; he is awaiting my assistance." And, leaving me to the guidance of my former co-worker, who had stood by, a pleased spectator, that good father turned to his holy task.

Together we set out for the home beyond the hills, my companion pleased and elated by my new happiness; I silent, but not ungrateful for her unselfish sympathy. As we proceeded we were stopped ever and again by sounds of distress or moans of despair, and paused to do what we could to relieve the sorrows of the unhappy, so that we did not make rapid progress.

At length we were close to the mountain beyond which lay my enchanting mission. We were nearly outside the realm of suffering, and I felt an exultant

thrill at the prospect so near to me, when suddenly I heard a strong man's voice calling *my name* in accents of despair. I stopped, and a spasm of fear shot through my heart, for as I gazed I beheld a familiar form and face, half buried from my sight by the clouds of darkness that emerged from and settled around the shrinking figure.

"Good heavens, *father!*" I cried, "how came you here? When did you die? and what is the matter?" In answer to my hurried questions, he, *my earthly father*, whom I had supposed alive and well in the flesh, looked up and moaned, "Child, is it you? Oh! I am so wretched! so wild! I am in torment, torment! See! see!"

"See what, father?" I demanded.

"Don't you see this bleeding heart that is before me all the time? *don't* you see it? and those scars eaten into it, and the great hollows made by the tears *she* shed because of my wrong-doing? *Don't you see it*—her heart? your mother's heart, torn and bleeding! the heart I made to suffer hundreds of times when I came home to her intoxicated and reeking with the fumes of liquor! *don't you see it?*"

I saw nothing but this piteous face and trembling frame, but evidently the bleeding heart, that conscience told him he had pained and saddened, was as tangible and plain to his sight as though it lay before us in objective form. For one of the conditions of spirit life is this: that whatever subjective thought possesses a soul, *that* becomes materialized, and is objective to his sight.

"Father, dear," I soothingly said, "mother is on earth, and her heart still lives and loves you: you have

done wrong, but you are sorry, and will atone for it — you will go to mother, and confess your sorrow. She will forgive and bless you.”

“I will go if you will go with me,” he interrupted; “I cannot do anything without you.”

I hesitated, observing which he cried, “Don’t leave me! don’t leave me!”

I could not; and with a spasm of regret, but a feeling of renunciation in my heart, I turned to my friend and said, “You must go on without me; my duty is *here*. Tell them I have sent you to take my place. You are fitted for the work perhaps better than I. You never sinned, but have given your pure life to others always. I gave mine in atonement; you gave yours from the first for *love*. Go to those little children, and give them your care.”

She protested, but I insisted, and at length, with reluctant air, she turned and sped toward the valley of peace. A deep and scorching pain burned in my breast at the thought of my blighted hopes and shattered prospects. My father, wrapped in his sorrows, knew nothing of my resolve, nor had he even seen the fair girl whom I had sent on her pleasant mission.

“Father,” I said, “I will go with you; I will stay with you as long as you need me. I will be your loving child, your spirit helper.”

And then a wonderful thing happened — mortals would call it a spiritual manifestation, and so it was: through the gloom and mist suddenly sprang a great, glowing, regal passion-flower, and as I gazed in pleasure on its lovely, velvety petals, and its royal central crown, its leaves unfolded and vanished, leaving in their place

a grand human face beaming upon me with approving eyes and that magnificent smile — the face of Benefice.

The vision vanished instantly, but my father caught a flash of its radiant splendor, and a glimpse of the departing face, and cried out in terror.

I soothed his fears, and together we started for our former earthly home. Then I learned that my father had been "dead" two months; that my mother was ill and feeble, but that other home interests and affairs were about as they had formerly been.

I induced my father to control my medium sister Lily, and communicate all his remorseful sorrows to my mother. He did so, confiding to her pitiful tenderness the secret of his fears and woes, and receiving her assurances of forgiveness in return.

This course cleared somewhat of the clouds from his heart; and then I began my task of teaching him the truths and lessons I had learned. He leaned upon me as though he were a little child and I a strong parent, and for a long time refused to allow me out of his sight. I strove patiently with him, leading him step by step to know and understand his own powers. Finally he began to grow self-reliant, to long to try his own faculties, and to look around him for spiritual employment. There was no lack of this for an earnest soul, and soon he was so busily engaged in attending upon the steps of and bringing spiritual or magnetic powers to the aid of a young physician whom he had met and known on earth, and who possessed great healing forces, as to permit my withdrawal from his side.

Once more I was free, but now there was no vacancy in the children's valley. Such were my thoughts; but

I was mistaken, for scarcely had I left my father to work out his own salvation in useful employments, before I was met by the good spirit "Benefice," and guided by him to a lovely home in a charming country, and placed in charge of four little innocents. Here I found congenial and happy employment. I loved children, and to know that I could train and guard and instruct four little immortal souls was a constant delight to me. It is no easy or unimportant task to so rear a child that its purest and best attributes of soul, its clearest faculties of mind, and its sweetest aspirations of heart may develop; but I strove constantly to do my work faithfully, and set about my duty with a fervent prayer in my heart for guidance and help.

In this beautiful valley are countless little cottage homes, embowered in green vines, and shaded by lofty trees. Flowers grow in abundance everywhere. Each dwelling is simply and tastefully furnished, and is inhabited by one or more teachers and guides, who have in charge from one to four little pupils. The benevolent people who dwell here are those who love children, and are happy in guiding their young minds in the paths of instruction. They are harmonious, loving, and in sympathy with humanity.

The little ones whose homes are here are waifs from the shores of earth — those who have untimely passed from the body; who, through neglect, or want, or inherited disease, or any other cause, could not retain their hold on physical life. There are many such beautiful spots in the spirit world where these little castaways from earth are taken and cared for. Under the influence of love, and the conditions of beauty brought

into their lives, all the noblest instincts and impulses of being are stirred within their breasts.

Each child is attended to according to its special needs, and trained in that particular line of labor and instruction for which it is best adapted. No tutor receives more than four pupils at any time in the valley where I found my school; for it is claimed by those wise in experience that not more than that number can be properly attended to.

In the centre of our valley stands a massive structure which gleams white and beautiful in the sunlight. Often the children come from their pleasant homes to the halls of this spacious temple, to listen to the words of wisdom from the lips of some exalted visitor, or to pass examination in their studies at the hands of the master teacher who comes to review them. More than once have I listened to words of counsel and of truth dropped from the lips of both Father Pierpont and Benefice, and others of equally exalted intelligence and wisdom, in this temple of light.

My co-workers were gentle and lovable, and I soon became friendly and even intimate with them. Many of them had loved friends on earth to whom they paid occasional or even frequent visits, bearing with them influences of peace and inspiration. I had no desire to revisit earth and its conditions; I thought I had forever done with all that belonged to it, but I was mistaken. I had still a mission to fulfil on earth of which I little dreamed. I knew my mother and those bound to me by fraternal ties were doing well, and that they had no need of my services. I occasionally sent them a word of love and cheer by some messenger-spirit, and

they knew I was doing my own work. My father was still attached to the young physician in whose career he was interested, and in passing on beneficent errands between his charge and my mother he found the contentment and occupation he sought.

CHAPTER VI.

WITHIN THE GATES.

ONE beautiful girl became my most trusted and intimate companion. To her I confided the secret of my past, and from her I learned the story of her life. She had been reared amid the influences of refinement and luxury; she had been the idol of her widowed father until, in her sixteenth year, he was suddenly taken from her. She bitterly mourned her loss, but, at nineteen, found consolation in the love of a true-hearted man, whom she soon wedded. This girl was a great lover of children, and would often stop in the street to speak a kind word or to give pennies to the little waifs she met. After two years of wedded life she passed from earth, leaving her husband nearly frantic with grief. "That was three years ago," she said, "and still he calls me and still he draws me to him and envelops me in his woe. I cannot stay away, for I love him, and when he mourns I must go to comfort him; but it keeps me from doing myself and my pupils justice here, and prevents me from accomplishing my duty. I long to see my blessed parents; they dwell in a higher sphere than this; but he holds me so I cannot go to them, although they sometimes come to me. My mother tells me I am now repaying the good Lord for my life of ease and pleasure on earth; and I am glad to do His work in caring for the little ones, if only I could do my full duty to them."

My friend expressed a great truth that I had long understood. By cherishing an absorbing grief for their departed friends, mortals all unwittingly tie those loved ones down to earthly conditions; debar them from the privileges and enjoyments of heavenly life, and prevent them from accomplishing the angelic duties which they desire and ought to perform. Sorrow for the departed is natural, and angels sympathize with the bleeding heart and tearful face that misses the presence of its beloved; but to cling to grief, to refuse to become reconciled to the transition of a friend is unwise, may even be selfish, and unkind to the risen spirit that pants to be free from the trammels of matter.

Some time after the disclosures made to me by my associate, Mercy, she came to me with a new light in her eyes and an expression of peace on her sweet face that was a revelation to me.

“What is it, dear?” I inquired.

“Oh! I am so happy — something so good has happened. My Edgar is becoming interested in a young lady: and you know what that means.”

I laughed aloud, and she continued: —

“Do you think it strange that I should be gratified at such a prospect? But no, you don’t, because you are a spirit; but you laugh because my happiness would seem so strange to mortals. Well, she is truly a refined and beautiful girl, and she will love my darling with all her might. They will be happy together; he will have the loving companionship of a true woman, and the associations of refinement and of peace that every man needs to develop his best powers and to make him understand his own spiritual nature. He will not love

me less nor forget me because of his new happiness ; but he will emerge from his gloom and become a cheerful and progressive being. I shall not cease to love my darling because he finds peace and comfort in the companionship of another ; but I shall rejoice in his good fortune and sympathize in his joy."

Time passed. Mercy grew more radiant and light-hearted constantly. I had never heard her voice raised in song before, but now it often rang out as clear and sweet as a lark's.

"I could not sing when Edgar was so unhappy," she said to me on one occasion, when she had told me of her husband's new marriage. "A weight like lead lay on my heart all the time. I used to sing once when in my father's home, but I thought I had forgotten how, until my darling's happiness took the weight off my spirit. His very joy gives me new life and power and buoyancy. It rings in melody through my heart, and makes me want to sing with the birds. I can go to him with greater power, too, for I don't have to penetrate the gloom now, and I can influence his life better than I ever could. Haven't I cause for rejoicing?"

It was wonderful to behold the change in my friend ; she accomplished her tasks with a ready power that was invigorating in itself. She gathered all the song-loving, musical children together, and trained their vocal powers, and guided their musical instincts with the skill of an inspired genius.

Everything she touched seemed to glow with beauty, and the very atmosphere around her vibrated with gladness. "I have found my vocation now," she said ; "I shall stay here and instruct the children in music, and

some day, when I feel my mission here is finished, I will seek my parents in the higher sphere."

My interest in my pupils and my friendship for my associates were unabated. I was contented in my work; yet sometimes a great longing to see the beloved one who years ago had parted from me on earth, and also to behold the face of my little angel sister Daisy, possessed me. A desire to find their heavenly home "beyond the gates" came into my heart, and only the thought that I had been placed here to do a work withheld me from making a desperate attempt to find the open way to their blest abode.

Sitting in the twilight of my own sad musings, I was bent upon the thought of the dear ones of long ago, when suddenly through the stillness the tones of a well-remembered voice fell upon my ear, and a radiant splendor opened around me. I looked up, startled to behold standing before me *him*, my beloved — my beloved who had died on earth so many years before.

Weak and faint, I gazed speechless, lest the blest vision should fade; but he smiled upon me, and opening his arms to me, said, "Is my little Blossom ready for me?" I fluttered toward him with a glad cry, and was folded in a spirit's pure embrace.

"Blossom," he said — and oh! how the sound of that old familiar pet name, that he alone ever gave to me, thrilled my being — "you have thought me far away from you, but I have never deserted you. I have been by your side in all the darkest hours of temptation and trial. I have watched over you. I have known of your work and your career. I have guided you many times when you felt a power, but knew not from whence it

came. My Blossom, I have come to transplant you to *my* home in the spirit spheres. Will you come with me?"

I looked at him with my soul in my eyes. Oh! how grand and noble he was, and how familiar every line of his features. He was not youthful; he had been many years older than I; and I was glad to see that he retained his familiar appearance. But there was no trace of weariness, no mark of time upon his face; only a grand, massive, matured expression of wisdom and peace that marked the man of experience. My darling! I would not have had him other than he was — *himself*.

"Oh!" I faltered, "I am not good enough; I have been sinful; I have not *grown* as you have."

"Your errors have been nobly atoned for, little Blossom; you have repented, and have begun a new life. You would not err again."

"Oh! I don't know," I wailed; "if the temptation came, I might succumb; I do not know my weakness; it might overpower me."

"We will see by and by; now you will come with me; there are many things for you to see. You have earned all that will be yours; bid your friends good-by, for we must hasten."

I allowed my darling to rule me. I passed out to the home of my friends to bid them farewell. I gathered my pupils and fondly embraced them. I told them I would visit them again and tell them of my new home. A sweet, motherly woman, who had recently come to our valley and who was without employment, gladly consented to fill my place as teacher to my little scholars. And in trusting confidence I

turned to my beloved and said, "Do with me as thou wilt."

He replied: "You have long mourned that you were barred *outside* the gates of heaven; but this charming valley is a part of Paradise, and no sweeter spot will you find. Your spirit is weary from the excess of emotion, and it will be best for me to convey you away while your senses are locked in a magnetic slumber. Yield yourself to me, and I will magnetize you."

I became passive, and as he made soft passes over my head and shoulders, a sweet, delicious, dreamy feeling of rest stole over me, until, softly as the fading of a summer day, my consciousness vanished and I knew no more.

* * * * *

When I awoke, it was to find myself amid new surroundings. I seemed to be reclining upon a bank of velvety moss that was strewn with flowers, the fragrance of which surged over and around me in waves of incense. For awhile I neither thought nor stirred, but yielded myself to the influence of the balmy breezes and rich odors that swept over me, and lay in a half-dreamy, delicious condition that was the very essence of *rest*. When I ventured to move and look around, I was delighted at the beauty of my surroundings. As far as the eye could gaze stretched fields upon fields of bending flowers, lawns upon lawns of smooth, velvety grass. The blossoms were fairer and sweeter than any I had ever beheld; many of them were of a rich creamy tint, cup-shaped, and nearly transparent. They seemed like chalices of light from which pure souls might sip the nectar of immortal life.

The verdure was fresh and odorous, while a peculiar soft, purplish bloom resting upon it gave such an appearance of beauty to the sward as is indescribable. In the distance the snowy walls of massive temples and those of less pretentious buildings gleamed.

At the moment when I aroused to consciousness a solemn, quiet hush pervaded the atmosphere, as if all nature was resting; or as if all life was bound in the holy silence of prayer. A delicate haze, flushed with a rosy tint, rested on all things, imparting an added loveliness to each flower and blade. As I gazed upon the beauty of the scene, my soul swelled with adoration, and as never before I realized the *grandeur* of life and the power of *God*.

Soon I became aware that I was not alone. I had missed my beloved guide, and he was not to be seen. A female of surpassing beauty bent above me, and a rich, thrilling voice addressed me, "Ah! I am so glad you have awakened; I am so anxious to greet you, and bid you welcome to this enchanting world. Dear friend, are you fully conscious?"

I bent an earnest glance upon that lovely face; its features seemed familiar, but I could not tell where I had met them.

"Yes, I am conscious; but may I ask who are you?" I whispered.

"Why, don't you know me? Am I so changed, then? Do you remember the sorrowing young mother whom you met in the Valley of Woe, and to whom you brought her first gleam of comfort?"

I started up with a cry of joy. "Why, Lettie! Lettie! is this — can this be you? Changed! yes, indeed! you have changed to an angel of light and beauty!"

My companion smiled, and said, "Yes, I am really Lettie, and all my present happiness and content I owe to you. I am no longer the despairing girl you met in the lower spheres and saved from misery, but I am an active, joyful woman, who does not count eternity long enough to express her gratitude for life and its experiences. But you have changed too, my dear friend, and I cannot call such a happy-looking woman as you are, 'Marah'; I shall call you '*sister*'; may I?"

I bowed assent, while glancing down at my robes, to discover them no longer of a woolly texture, and hue of dove-gray, but soft and shining like satin, and of silver brightness.

"They told me I might be the first to welcome you, I begged so hard for the privilege. I was your first pupil, you know, and you gave me the light of my mother's home and love, and saved me from *myself*. Oh! I can never bless you enough for what you have done for me. But I want to know all about yourself and what you have been doing." And so saying, Lettie settled herself down beside me.

Briefly I told her of my experiences since the morning I bade her and her spirit father adieu in her mother's quiet home.

"What a noble life!" she exclaimed, as I finished. "But I have not been idle, either, though my work has not been like yours;" and then she related to me her own story since we had met before.

It seemed that she and her father had lingered with her mother, developing that lonely woman's medial powers until she had become a reliable clairvoyant and trance-medium; that then they induced her to make

her powers known to the public, and to utilize her gifts for the enlightenment of humanity. Of course the new medium found many trials by the way ; old friends who had clung to her in former times, when her daughter's disgrace burned heavy in her heart, now turned coldly aside, that she had become a Spiritualist, some not hesitating to avow their belief in her guilt as an impostor, and others to declare her a woman gone mad over her troubles.

Under the advice of her guides, the medium removed to a distant city and entered upon the professional practice of her mediumship. From the first she was successful. Her spirit husband became her magnetic protector and business guide. Lettie soon grew to understand the laws of control, and became a messenger between mourning hearts on earth and their equally anxious spirit friends. "I think I have given over three thousand characteristic and truthful spirit messages of love, advice, and consolation to as many sorrowing mortals," she said, "and I am happy in such work. My mother is always gentle and kind to everybody ; she always sits for the poor, free of charge ; she is very benevolent and she is universally beloved. Her home is a kind of paradise to the weary and oppressed."

But perhaps that portion of Lettie's story that interested me most was in connection with the handsome tenor who had betrayed her young heart and caused all her woe. Him she had sought and found. She had approached him with her gentle influences, which wrought upon his heart and awakened his slumbering conscience. Often thoughts of the sweet girl he had wronged tintured his waking hours, and floated through his dreams.

He began to wonder how she had fared; then to hope she had risen above her trouble; then to feel compunctions of conscience; and finally to be filled with pangs of remorse over his own wrong-doing. At length he determined to return to her native place and to seek her forgiveness — even to repair the wrong as far as lay in his power.

This was a great step for the young man to take, for he had secured a good position as a popular tenor with a leading concert company in a large city, and had become the centre of attraction to all the pretty and accomplished young ladies in the set in which he moved. The singer, however, put his resolve into practice, as far as retracing his steps to the home of Lettie's girlhood, only to discover the home destroyed and its inmates absent. From a former acquaintance he learned the sad fate of the poor girl, and the subsequent mysterious development of her mother as a spiritual medium, who had later removed to C—. Overwhelmed with shame and remorse, the young man travelled to C—, and after some search found Lettie's mother, to whom he related his story, professing repentance and begging forgiveness. Taught by the angels who guided her, the woman granted that pardon for which he sought, but not without giving him a lesson of admonition and advice that sunk deep into his heart.

This was not the last visit. During his stay in C—, he again and again called upon the lady, only to be brought into direct communion with Lettie, and to receive from her pure lips tokens of love and forgiveness, as well as evidences of immortality. Their child, too,

was brought to him, and he began to learn the wonderful depths of spiritual affection from these pure souls to whom he owed so much.

The great work of reformation thus begun in the heart of the man grew and flourished. He became humble as a little child. His soul began to grow in sympathy with his fellows; he was no longer conceited and arrogant, but loved to do good wherever he found an opportunity.

"Oh!" continued the narrator, "he is so good now; he loves everybody, I believe. He knows that he and I will meet and be true soul-companions in the future; and he says he means to prove himself worthy the blessing. I have perfect confidence in his honor—I *know him so well*. He is soon to lead to the altar a beautiful woman, who will prove a constant helpmeet and blessing to him. I advised him to take the step, and not to check the growing interest in his heart for her. I can spare his love to a pure-hearted woman, who will crown his life with peace. At first he hesitated; but I convinced him that it was not only right, but best for the unfoldment of his soul-powers, and he has asked her to be his wife. I am glad for them both."

I had seen and heard of so many similar cases that I was not at all surprised at Lettie's closing remarks.

"But what are you doing now?" I asked.

"Oh! I am still my mother's spirit messenger, but I have a lovely home *here* with my grandmother. She is a beautiful woman, just like my mother, and she takes care of my Bertie for me. I do not stay here all the time, but when I am not needed on earth I find my *heaven* here. Father comes and goes, too, and we are

happy together. But you must see my Bertie, and here he comes." .

While we had been conversing, the rosy haze of the atmosphere had slowly risen, leaving a gleam of mellow sunshine upon the grass and flowers. Afterward I learned that at intervals this ruby haze descends from the clouds, wrapping all things in dreamy beauty and imparting a magnetic condition to the human beings who dwell here. At such moments they take their *rest*; they do not lose consciousness, but sink into a state of semi-slumber which is very refreshing, and from which they arouse filled with vitality and activity.

The hazy condition of the atmosphere brings a gentle, dew-like moisture to the trees and flowers, and gives an air of perfect repose and beauty to all surrounding things.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE SUNRISE LAND.

As my companion turned, I saw a lady of gentle mien and noble appearance approaching, leading by the hand a boy of three or four summers. The child's head was uncovered, and his raven curls floated in the balmy air. His wine-brown eyes flashed with merriment, and his lids bubbled over with the music of childish laughter. His dress was of shining white fabric, and he had covered it with the beautiful flowers that grew around us.

Lettie gracefully presented the new-comers to me, the lady as her grandmother—so youthful-looking as she was, too—and the little one as the infant I had held and caressed. "Oh! what a beautiful boy," I exclaimed; "I shall love him as my own."

"I acknowledge you have a claim on him, for you saved both him and his mother to happiness and this;"—and the elder lady swept the heavenly landscape with her hand—"but see, others are coming, and we must move on."

The glorious sun now shone brightly, turning the tiny bead-like drops upon the flowers to gems of brilliant light. A delicious balmy softness filled the atmosphere. Forms moved here and there, and groups of children could be seen meeting in the fields and upon the lawns, and their merry tones rang upon the air.

A party of men and women had come up to us, and

stood a little in the background. As I turned, Lettie said hastily, "Yes, we must go; but we will see you again, and many times, I trust. I shall never forget that I was the first to welcome you to this heavenly sphere;" and embracing me warmly, she motioned to her elder companion, and taking her cherub boy by the hand, led him away.

But I was not left long to my meditations, for scarcely had they turned from me than a large, handsome woman advanced from the group of bystanders, and held out both hands to me. Her dress was of pale blue, and set off her clear complexion and brilliant eyes with wonderful effect. Here again was some one I had seen before, but could not tell where. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "you do not know poor Kate — and she loves you so!"

I started, amazed. This radiant woman, the wretched Kate whom I had first seen as the most despairing and abandoned of women, and who, after a long period of earnest labor for others, had earned the right to be respected? She whom I had left in a felon's cell, attending upon the man who had taken her mortal life — how wonderful!

The woman divined my thoughts, and with a magnificent smile said: "Yes, it is Kate here to welcome and to bless you. *This* is my home; I have found my angel mother, or rather she has found me, and when I am away from earth and not with *him*, I am here in her loving home. She first came to me in *his* cell and helped me with her influence. I could bear to look at her *then*, and she brought me here to get strength and rest. Oh!" she continued, "I am so glad, so *glad* you have come;

you could have done so long ago if you had not been so distrustful of your own powers. You will lead a glorious life here."

I expressed my heartfelt pleasure at meeting this woman, who had known the very depths of degradation, of misery and despair; and who had by her own efforts overcome sin and passion and risen to these beautiful heights, and then I inquired for her friend, the felon, in his prison cell.

"Oh! my poor Jack; yes, he still lives, but he is far gone with consumption. You would not recognize him, he is so pale and wan, and he is very gentle and kind now. He suffers in his mind from remorse, and it is wasting his life. Poor fellow! he was always kind-hearted, and but for drink he would have made a noble man. But he will soon be over now, and he will get a new chance. I go to him daily; I seldom leave him, for he needs me; and when he passes from the body I shall be with him to help him up to a good condition."

The revelations made to me by my former *protégée* were deeply interesting, and I did not notice a pale, gentlemanly man, who, with lines of intellectual thought on his brow and a smile of welcome playing around his bearded lips, stood gazing earnestly upon us.

"Oh! I must not keep you," said Kate, "for others wish to greet you. My blessing is not much, but you have it every hour, and my mother prays for you always; she is a lovely saint, and you must know her by and by. I will now leave you to your friends, and go to Jack — he is calling me."

With a parting embrace she moved away, and the

gentleman stepped forward and clasped my hand. "Dear lady," said he, in a rich, deep tone, "I am thankful for this privilege. Allow me to bid you welcome, and to ask God's blessing upon your future. I am he whom you sought, with your counsel and example, to lift above the depths of woe; he who, because of his wrong-doing in betraying the trust imposed in him by his employers, hurried himself into eternity to avoid the shame and disgrace of discovery; he whom you guided back to his home and kindred, and taught how to make reparation. I give you greeting."

How very glad I was to meet this man! All the memories of his past experience rose up before me, and while warmly greeting him I gave him my congratulations upon his present condition.

"My spirit home is here," he said; "you must sometime visit it; I have many things to show you. I use part of my time in trying to manifest my ideas in the construction of certain instruments for the advancement of scientific research. You might be pleased to examine some of my productions. But I do not remain here all the time. I have a work to accomplish in connection with my family and friends on earth, and I am often with them."

My friend soon passed on, and other men and women whom I had known and sympathized with *outside the gates* came and gave me greeting, each one speaking a pleasant word of remembrance, and all so filled with laudation of the little good I had happened to do them that I was quite overwhelmed, and instead of swelling with pride, began to feel my humbleness. Yet a thrill of joy ran through my being at the words of love and

prayers of blessing that fell upon me. "Ah!" thought I, "I would rather receive the honest commendation of these hearts that have been tried through suffering and molded into shapeliness through a hard discipline, than to have the plaudits of the multitude or the wealth of the Indies."

Standing there upon the velvety carpet of moss, the fragrant flowers springing around me and scenting the sweet, sun-lighted air, and receiving the gratulations and benisons of these spirit people, I felt as a queen should feel in accepting the homage of her worthy subjects. Ah! then I learned that one of the distinctive qualities of an uprisen soul is *gratitude* for the help it has received, and that remembrance of past assistance never fades away from the spirit.

I wondered how it happened that all these people whom I had known in the sorrowful land — and many of them had been far more debased and miserable than I — had arrived in this Sunrise World before myself. But later I learned that, through my own self-distrust of my powers, and through my shrinking from meeting the pure souls whom I loved, but who I feared could only censure me, I had *myself* kept up the barrier that held me from this region of delight and beauty; and that others, having no such feelings to hold them back, although they had been more sinful than I, had, by their efforts to do good, speedily grown up into the heavenly condition.

The last but one to approach me was my own father. I knew him at a glance, and was glad indeed to see him here. "Child," said he, "welcome to the land of sunshine and love. Here you will find all things to satisfy

your cravings for beauty and your thirst for knowledge. Here you will find happiness and peace. Your old father gives you his blessing. You have wrought a good work in him."

"Nay, father," I interrupted, "good works are wrought in the soul by *its own labor*; I only helped you to understand your condition and to find your true self."

"It's all the same, my girl," he rejoined. "I owe my present light to you, and I do not forget it. I am not living here, exactly, for I am still engaged in attending your mother and in guiding young Dr. H.; but I come here occasionally to inspect the lovely home that is in preparation for your mother, who will soon be here. Her pure life and constant work for other people throw off the material, which little Daisy gathers up, and, with the assistance of wise builders, transforms into the most beautiful appointments of a lovely home. But here comes the child herself; she will tell you of it, for I must go."

I hardly observed the departure of my father, for my eyes were transfixed at the apparition that floated rather than walked toward me, — an angelic creature, so ethereal in appearance that she seemed almost transparent. A mellow light enveloped her entire form, illuminating her features and shining around her chestnut locks, which hung in rich profusion upon her sloping shoulders until every hair shone like a golden thread. Her smiling, half-parted lips and radiant blue eyes were filled with love and betrayed the eagerness of their owner. The robes of this dainty creature were snowy white, and soft, like the finest mull, and clung around her slender form with witching grace.

In a moment her arms were around me — how soft and delicate they were — and her sweet voice murmured, “Oh! my darling sister, I am so happy! so happy! I am Daisy, and I love you.” This was my Daisy, the little flower I had tended in her babyhood, and of whom I had often dreamed. What a sweet and lovely evangel she was! I *cannot* describe our meeting; its memory is too tender and sacred to be revealed to others.

But she had come to show me the way to my new habitation, and to take me to the new home being fitted up for our mother. “And for father too,” she said, “though he does not know it. He is doing nobly now; and his good works are providing strong and enduring material for the dwelling; and mamma is sending off a magnetism that is woven and fashioned into the finest and most lovely adornments. Oh! we have rare builders and skillful designers here.”

As we passed lightly over the shining fields, and by the white dwellings, most of which were open at the sides, and through which we could observe the happy inmates at their study or their work, I learned many things from my companion of the laws and conditions of this new life, — more than I could detail to you had I a twelvemonth of my medium’s time at my disposal; for in the higher spheres we learn rapidly, as our understanding is *quickened* by the influence about us.

We at length paused before a circular building that was evidently newly erected. The carvings of its supporting pillars were beautiful and unique. Its dome shone in the sun like alabaster, and I could see its interior walls were of azure and gold. “This is mamma’s home,” Daisy said; and as we passed through the smooth

walks, lined on each side with feathery shrubs and blooming flowers, she added, "And this is her garden; she loves plants, you know. She will grow young and strong in looking after them; she cannot grow sweeter."

We entered the house. There were no side walls. All was open, save here and there where spacious panels, extending from ceiling to floor, supported some elegant landscape scene or allegorical picture.

The floors were inlaid with mosaic work that shone and glistened like mother-of-pearl.

Every apartment was tastefully furnished, and nothing seemed wanting but the inmates to make up a lovely home.

"Not yet; a little longer, and it will be completed," said my sister, as I looked over the future home of my parents and thought it perfect. "It needs a few finishing touches to make it so." A tall, grave-looking man was busy with a piece of fresco-work in the center apartment, and a sweet-looking woman occupied herself with twining a lovely vine around a dainty statuette. "They are old friends of our parents," Daisy explained; "they are skillful in such work, and they love to do this for the sake of old friendship. We never lack for skillful assistance in any department of labor at the hands or brains of loving friends."

Our tour of inspection over, we passed out and on a little distance, where a fine mansion rose against the background of a grove of noble trees. In front spread a beautiful lawn, unbroken by tree or ornament, and to the right I beheld a magnificent garden of blooming flowers and winding walks.

Coming to meet us, I beheld the form of my beloved.

Taking both my hands in his, he exclaimed in tones of deep emotion, "Welcome, my Blossom, to your heavenly home. May it prove a haven of love and rest to you. When I left you in your magnetic slumber, I hastened hither to ascertain if all things were in readiness for you. It was meet that I should convey you to the land of Blessing, but it was fitting that those who had been benefited by your ministrations should greet your first awakening, and that your angel sister should guide you to this spot. So I have bided my time ; but now we are at HOME!"

At these words he led me up the silvery steps to the spacious portal of the mansion. Daisy, unseen, had slipped away from us, and we were alone. Yet the whole atmosphere of the place seemed alive with holy presences, and the air appeared to vibrate to the tones of joyful and loving voices.

I shall not pause to describe my beautiful spirit home to you. If I went into its minutest details, mortal language could not adequately depict its luxurious appointments, or the atmosphere of harmony and peace pervading its walls ; but I must attempt to tell you of one apartment into which my companion led me, during our round of inspection.

It was a spacious and lofty room, running the whole length of the house. The floor was paved in blocks of solid blue and white, of a substance resembling stone. The ceiling pure white, studded with golden stars. There were tables and seats, and cases of books, and stands of music scattered about. In one end flourished an immense stand of plants and flowers, of which I shall have more to say further on.

But the walls — the walls of this apartment attracted my attention immediately, their appearance was so peculiar.

Directly in front of me was a large panel of a pearl-like substance, the lower portion of which appeared colorless; as it rose, the panel bore different tints; first, of a rose flush, very delicate and beautiful, that deepened into crimson. Beyond this appeared a leaden gray, crossed with lines, some of deep black, and others of golden hue; this portion of the panel was thickly strewn with little cavities, as though the constant falling of raindrops had left their impression upon its surface. Above this cloudy and seamed space spread another, dark and billowy, as though covered with vapory shadows. A little beyond me I observed another tablet, stretching from floor to ceiling. This was of inky blackness, and shone like jet. In the center of the lower half a single golden star of large dimensions gleamed, and the upper portion bore a double crimson rose, the petals and leaves of which started out in beautiful distinctiveness against their sable background.

At regular distances other panels appeared; the spaces between them were either plates of crystal through which we could see the outer sunshine, or open apertures which looked upon a pleasant balcony.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT HOME.

I TURNED an inquiring gaze upon my companion, to which he responded: "You wonder what this means; let me tell you, although you could discover it for yourself. These walls contain the history of your life. We will interpret them together:

"This first panel reveals the story of an earthly experience; the lower neutral tint typifies infancy and childhood; the lines that begin to cross it higher are the childish griefs or joys or lessons that made a lasting impression upon the mind. The dainty flush lighting up the colorless pearl typifies that happy period when love first dawned in your heart, and as its sweet influence permeated your being the flush deepens into a radiant beauty." And he bent upon me a glance full of tender affection.

"The leaden hue above expresses your experience when he whom you loved was removed from earth; the sadness overspreading your heart partook of this hopeless cast. And now we can trace the trying discipline of your after-years. These black lines are the struggles and the temptations that assailed you; these golden ones the heroic resolves you made to do better, the self-sacrifices of your life for those whom you loved, and the good deeds you performed for those in need. You must not think, dear, that your life was devoid of good works; it was crossed with golden lines of love and

usefulness. The upper section of this panel, so smoky and cloudy in appearance, represents the final scene of earth life, when, hopeless and despairing, you passed from the body; it also includes that portion of your spirit existence when you remained under the old physical conditions beneath your father's roof. The indentations that you behold thickly scattered over the greater part of this tablet are the marks of the *tears you have shed* in your earthly career; they are indelible, and evince the sorrow and chastisement of a human heart. This second panel," pointing to the jetty space, "represents the first condition of your spirit existence *outside the gates*. Its ebony hue well describes the total darkness of your life, the hopeless, pitiable, despondent state of your heart, when, wrapped in its own self-contemplation and condemnation, it despairingly longed to be alone, alone. But the golden star reveals that, in the midst of its gloom and despair, the light of love still shone in that heart, eventually to make its radiance felt. The upper portion is still dark, but from it springs a royal damask rose. Ah! my love, when compassion and sympathy for an erring fellow-creature were born in your soul, and you spoke the words of cheer and gave the ready assistance to sorrowing Lettie that led her out of misery, that beautiful flower was carved upon the ebony wall, and a matchless blossom of love sprang into bloom. You will find its original prototype yonder among the living flowers, and other sweet blossoms that have sprung to life from your soul, too, are there. They are the flowers of the spirit and are fadeless." And he motioned toward the rear end of the apartment where the plants and flowers stood.

I listened in wonder and delight to this strange reading of my past life; we moved on to the third panel, and my guide continued:

“You will observe this is of enamel, dark blue, not ebony, like the second. This represents the second stage of your spiritual experience; the lower half is strewn with pearly leaves and blossoms, typifying the noble impulses and promptings of benevolence that stirred within you. In the centre of the upper section gleams a radiant light, giving a soft and beautiful effect to the whole tablet; in the midst of this light blooms a lovely flower, bell-shaped, with leaves of pearl and heart of gold. That light first shone upon this wall, and that brilliant cup appeared when you gave to poor Kate the sympathy and counsel that led her to make of herself a pure-hearted, noble woman, from a most abandoned creature. Above this section we see choice blossoms of the richest colors; they were graven when your sympathy and compassion, your advice and aid, went out to those in need. Their living originals are all to be found yonder. This fourth entablature is of a beautiful blue, that shades to the softest gray; each shade is lined with golden trailing vines and strewn with flowers, all emblematical of your good works, except the upper portion of pearl-gray, which simply bears a regal passion-flower. That flower blossomed into life when you renounced the pleasant prospect before you of dwelling in a happy home with the innocent children, to attend the steps and guide the remorseful life of your father. You will find it among the plants.”

How vividly a picture rose before me: My girlish companion and myself pressing toward the happy

valley; our pause at the sound of some one's wails; my discovery of my father; his prayer that I should not leave him; my renunciation of my hopes and my resolve to stay with him, and then the wonderful vision I had seen of a magnificent passion-flower, which vanished, leaving the approving face of Benefice in its place. But where were Benefice and good Father Pierpont? I had seen neither of them since coming here. Perceiving my thoughts, my dear one said: "All in good time; they are not far away, and you will soon see them."

Further on was a panel of lovely dark gray, bestrewn with brilliant flowers; all was like mother-of-pearl, shining and bright; this, my guide said, typified my life and experience with the children that I had taught before reaching this, my present home.

Next appeared a tablet of silvery brightness, which was untouched save by a beautiful crimson flush like the early dawn in a summer sky, that spread across its lower surface. I was told the last represented my coming to this condition of life that was now mine, and that the upper plain surface was yet to be engraved by my future. Lastly, a snow-white panel that gleamed and glistened like frostwork spread itself before us, unbroken by line or curve,—a panel which the coming time was to see beautified or marred by my own acts.

Finally, we approached the plants and flowers in the rear of the room. How luxuriant and beautiful they were, and how their fragrance scented the atmosphere! Sure enough, as my dear one had said, here was the living type of every blossom and vine that appeared engrafted in shining stone or pearl upon the tablets of

the room. Here were the double crimson rose, the bell-shaped delicate flower with its golden heart, the smaller blossoms and vines, and the royal passion-flower with its shining crown. How wonderful and how beautiful they all were!

"I think you will love to linger here, and so I have fitted up this room for your exclusive use. Here are works of art, music, works of literature, and all that will please you. You can work, or study, or dream here when you choose. No one can read the history of these walls but those who are in closest sympathy with yourself and who can understand you. Indeed, you will not be likely to admit any here but those who *do* sympathize with you." And my companion smiled upon me as I turned an affectionate, grateful gaze upon him.

I had already learned that kindred spirits, those who truly love each other, do not need the language of tongues, the clasping of hands, the embracing of forms to express or to satisfy their love. But there is a delightful sensation of peace, of rest, of satisfaction, and of joy in the heart of a spirit when in the presence of its beloved, that expresses more than any external manifestation can do. There is a feeling of *oneness*, a perfect blending of being that is indescribable and that is all-satisfying.

Before we had tarried long in this pleasant association, we discovered visitors approaching through the grounds, and to my joy, Benefice and Father Pierpont were in a moment announced by my little Daisy, who preceded them. The meeting was a happy one, and I was more gratified than tongue can tell when Mr.

Pierpont inquired if I would like to become his pupil and to enter upon a life of study.

My life now became one ceaseless round of study and of self-improvement. I had always longed for the advantages of a liberal education. On earth my thirst for knowledge had never been quenched, and my desires to lead an intellectual life were forever unsatisfied. But now all was changed. Assisted by my beloved and taught by kind Mr. Pierpont, my mind expanded, my knowledge increased, my intellectual proclivities developed, and I learned many lessons of truth that can never be taken from me. Books were useful to me, works of art held their place in cultivating my mind; but these were all incidental to the verbal instruction and *objective* teaching of my tutors.

And now I was so happy, in the presence of my beloved, with the instruction of my teachers, with the companionship of little Daisy—who served as a messenger spirit between this and lower stages of spiritual life—and other loved friends, that only the most joyful experiences came to my heart. The upper portion of the silvery panel in the room I loved most to occupy began to glow with golden lines of achievement and radiant stars of conquest, under the skilful hand of my darling, as I conquered some new difficulty on the road to knowledge, or gained some important point in my efforts to cultivate my soul-powers.

I had triumphed over the ignorance of the past; I had faithfully accomplished every task and learned every lesson set before me. I was preparing myself, under the tuition of my teachers, to enter a large academy or school, where the very highest branches of an

advanced education are taught, and where I should be under the direct teaching of Benefice, who was one of the head masters of the school. My aim was to achieve excellence in the command of language, of composition, and of mental philosophy, that I might not only rank with the most cultured and refined of my sphere, but also become fitted as a teacher and director of others.

And now my time had come. Father Pierpont declared I was prepared to take my seat in the great halls of learning, and all my dear ones rejoiced with me.

The silvery tablet, so like the silken robes I always wore in these days, was also completed, and strangely enough my beloved had finished it by carving a snow-white hand upon the upper section, with its index finger pointing to the spotless panel beyond, — “Pointing to your future, Blossom,” he gently said, when I inquired its meaning, and I asked no more.

A group of spirits were standing upon the shore of a smiling river. Upon the banks of the stream a large and spacious dwelling stood—it was the hospitable home of John Pierpont; around and beyond it for long distances pretty white cottages and blooming gardens spread; they were the homes of peace and content, of those who had been benefited, taught, and uplifted by this good man, and who had settled around him, as children gather around a beloved parent.

Not a great way off appeared the stately portals and massive walls of the college that I was about to enter, and still beyond it, but visible through the clear, soft air, standing upon a beautiful hill, could be seen the home of Benefice. The group of spirits upon the bank of the river was Father Pierpont, Lettie and her father,

Kate, my own father, my beloved, and myself. We were discussing my future plans and labors.

In a moment I discovered our little Daisy gliding swiftly toward us, but instead of taking her place by my side, in obedience to my movement, she hurried past, with an expression of concern on her sweet face, and disappeared through the academical portals.

When she reappeared Benefice was by her side. They approached our group, and saluted us. "What troubles you, Daisy?" I inquired.

"He will tell you," she replied.

And Benefice did tell us; tell us of a mortal, a lovely woman, a medium who had been induced to take her gifts before the public, and to professionally serve as a medium between the two worlds. She had wonderful powers, but was extremely sensitive, and susceptible to influences. Already she had come under the attention of a strong, positive, impure-minded man who had marked her as his future victim. This unsuspecting girl needed the guidance of a pure-minded, positive female spirit; one who would take her in charge and attend her; a spirit who had gained self-reliance, who was sympathetic, and who understood the laws of psychology, of spirit control and of mediumship. Unless such a guide could be *at once* despatched to the medium she was doomed.

"She is so lovely," cried Daisy, "I would save her if I could; but I am not strong enough to counteract the effects of a positive earthly magnetism."

I felt as though the ground was slipping away from me, as though life and motion and activity had become suspended. Ought I to offer to do this thing? Was

this trial in store for *me*? Was I called upon to renounce my prospects, my plans, my hopes, and to take up my life on earth in connection with an unknown woman? Inclination said *no*, duty answered **YES.**

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

THE struggle was sharp but brief; my better self triumphed, and I announced my resolve without a sigh of regret. My associates protested, but I was firm. At length they yielded to my judgment, and then I knew how I had gratified them.

"Ah! my Blossom," cried my best beloved, "now you have won the greatest victory of your life! Do you remember your fear, when I came to bear you from the children's valley hither, that if the trial of temptation should come you would falter before it? The trial has come, and you have shown yourself strong and noble. It has been said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend'; but *we* know that none have greater love than she who renounces hope and joy and love for the blessing of another human life."

"Oh! sister," whispered Daisy, "I am so glad! It is *our own Lily* who needs you."

Oh! then I was anxious to be gone, ay, even glad to go from these dear ones; for had I not been told that my precious sister Lily, the pride and pet of our earthly household, the medium through whom our family first learned of immortal life, was in peril and needed the protecting care of her spirit sister?

I will not dwell upon my parting with the group by the shore, nor of my advent in my mother's earthly

dwelling. I found my medium sister daily sitting for the curious public, and I took her under my care. Through her organism I communicated with my now very delicate mother, and gave lessons of instruction and advice to Lily herself. I supplied the magnetic influence she required to make her a self-poised woman and to develop the stronger, more self-reliant qualities of her nature. When the designing man who had marked her as his prey approached her, I was by his side. As yet his attentions were of only the most gentle and courteous character. But once I saw by the appearance of his spirit that his time for revealing his true self was nigh. Then I entranced my sister, and, by the revealments I made to the man, the knowledge I displayed of his intentions, the words of condemnation and of admonition I gave him, so abashed and humbled him that he begged my pardon for his evil thoughts and promised amendment. I never saw him again, for he visited our habitation no more.

Soon after this occurrence, my mother passed to the spirit world; through the organism of my sister I daily conversed with my beloved parent, preparing her mind for the change so close upon her, and when at last her eyes of flesh closed peacefully, and her spirit emerged from its house of clay, I was the first to give her a spirit's loving welcome, and to deliver her to the tender care and keeping of my father and Daisy, who had come to conduct her to the beautiful home prepared for her.

I remained with my medium sister for a year after our mother's transition, and continued to act as her adviser and guide. In the meanwhile the young physician whom my father still attended as a magnetic helper,

having frequently met Lily, and been attracted by her gentle character and lovely demeanor, offered her his hand in marriage. He was accepted, and their union would be consummated in one year from the date of my mother's decease.

My father was delighted at this prospect, and through the organism of my sister expressed to the young man his approval of the match. Then for the first time the physician learned how deeply he was indebted to the spirit father of his betrothed for the success he had achieved in his profession.

It had been decided by the lovers that after their marriage Lily should no longer sit for the promiscuous public as a medium, although she would still continue to exercise her gifts, under the direction of her guides, for friends, or for any humanitarian purpose that the spirits might advise.

My sister had now developed into a strong, clear, self-reliant character, although her bearing was as gentle and sweet, and her heart as loving and kind as ever. A graceful, beautiful woman, she would adorn the home that had been chosen for her own.

It is pleasant to bands of spirits, who have selected a medium for special work, to feel that their instrument is ready and willing to unite in harmony with them. Sometimes wise intelligences bring two sensitives, who are in sympathy with spiritual things, and whose natures are attuned to the harmony of the spheres, together for particular purposes. They unite the magnetic and electric forces, the positive and the negative qualities of the two, and thus form a battery of power for future work. From the center of attraction thus arranged, the spirit

workers go out to various places where help is needed, bearing with them stores of magnetism in the form of healing power, or of stimulating mental energy, or of impressive influences which they exert upon those for whom they labor. Thus may much be accomplished by invisible attendants, in ways but little known on earth.

By bringing my sister Lily, with her mediumistic qualities, and her lover, with his positive, yet magnetic nature and his coöperative spirit, together, the spirit world formed a battery for the utilization of powers and the concentration of spiritual forces that might otherwise go largely to waste, and thus succeeded in inaugurating a work for humanity, by sending out influences and magnetic forces from their center for the advancement of needed measures.

Spirits, in attending to such means of concentrating power, of consolidating their forces and distributing their enforcements, do not always work after the example or in accordance with the opinion of mortals. Having become sure of their power over their instruments to do good, and seeing clearer the work to be done and the end in view than earth children can do, they press on in their purpose, undismayed by the criticisms of the multitude.

The union of my sister and her lover might not prove altogether advantageous in a worldly or ambitious point of view, but spiritually and truly it would be all that could be desired.

I now felt myself again free; my sister no longer required my care. Surrounded as she was by protecting influences on both sides of life, and herself grown self-

reliant and strong, I turned longingly to my spirit home. I yearned for the dear ones I had left within the gates, and I felt I must go to them.

When in the spirit world, engaged in my pursuits, or engrossed in my musings, I noticed not the lapse of time. A spirit may experience an eternity of woe or bliss in a day; and measured by events, our "years" may be hastened or prolonged. But here I was aware of the passage of time, and I knew when my sister's wedding-day should dawn it would round out the eighth year that had passed since I drifted into the spirit life. I had lived on earth thirty-four years, therefore I should now be forty-two; I did not feel older than when I left the earth—on the contrary, there was a certain exhilaration and buoyancy of feeling I had never known in the body, and which made me feel perennially fresh and strong, and almost youthful.

My sister's wedding-day at length arrived, and brought with it not only all the dear brothers and sisters and relatives and friends of earth, but also a large concourse of dear ones from the spirit side, to witness the ceremony and to bless the happy pair. It was truly a reunion of our family, and a joyous occasion to spirits and mortals alike.

When my mother and Daisy again sought their spirit home, I accompanied them. The pretty dwelling I had visited with my angel sister before was now completed, and its every spot seemed consecrated and lighted up by the presence of its presiding genius, my sainted mother. In this perfect nook she and father and Daisy lived happily together. But each one still had duties

as comforter, messenger, or magnetic supporter to earth's children; and often were they absent from their heavenly abode, and engaged in ministering to the weary or sad.

Once more I was at rest in my own beloved home; *at rest*, yet not idle; for I again bent to my studies and my spiritual tasks with unabated ardor. My beloved met me with the most perfect cordiality, and it seemed to me that our beings blended in more complete harmony than ever before. In aspiration, in sympathy, in *all things* we were as one. A perfect understanding of each other was ours, and we now had no need of speech to comprehend each other's souls — our thoughts were clearly defined to one another.

Now my robes were no longer silvery gray and silken. They had become as white as the purest and freshest snow, and were as soft and beautiful as the finest, richest lace that your Eastern looms can produce. I had changed in appearance, too, having grown more ethereal, more into harmony with the exalted conditions of my spirit home; and it seemed to me that my mind was clearer, and more perceptive, also. Certainly I could readily grasp the lessons I studied and complete the tasks I essayed without difficulty.

The snowy, glittering panel of my historical apartment now bore a single white lily, that started out from the background as if springing to life. It was a beautiful creation, and had been carved by my beloved as a token of my self-renunciation when I turned from him and heaven to protect my mortal Lily. Among the plants in my room I found a lovely flower blooming in the most exquisite fragrance and beauty. This was

a living counterpart of the lily on the wall, and it still continues to delight me with its delicate odors and rich beauty.

Very soon after my return from earth I entered the academy that I had so nearly reached before. There I engaged in new studies, and entered the path of research for the hidden mysteries of knowledge with eager zeal. Truth after truth was revealed to me. My powers unfolded, my mental abilities began to express themselves, and received the kind encouragement of Benefice, my present tutor. After a while I was assigned a class in moral philosophy, and grateful for the trust imposed in me, I sought to do my best in inculcating moral principles in my pupils, and in expounding spiritual ethics to them.

My home was ever open to my friends, and many rare moments of social enjoyment and associative labors were passed within its walls. Frequently, too, we met in the homes of those we loved; and whether it was in the pretty dwelling of my parents and sister, or under the hospitable roof of Father Pierpont, or within the spacious and inviting walls of Benefice that we met, our gatherings were always marked with inspiring song and instructive word, and never failed to leave us benefited by their occurrence.

In the spirit world we gradually come to reject the names by which we were distinguished on earth, and to adopt some cognomen that is adapted to us. A distinguishing trait of character, some grace of spirit, some application of ability may furnish us with a name, and we are usually addressed by it by our discriminating spirit associates before we learn to know it ourselves.

Thus one queenly, pure-souled teacher in our academy, who has a faculty for illuminating the minds of her pupils on any point she has to teach, is known as "Vesta." One whose powers of song are marvellous is known as "Melodia." Mr. Pierpont is universally addressed as "*Father*," so kindly paternal is his bearing and manner. My noble instructor, to whom I owe so much, from his great benevolence of character and noble nature is called "*Benefice*"; his lovely wife, who is a most beautiful and refined woman, is known as "Beulah"; their oldest daughter, one of the purest souls of a pure, exalted sphere, and who is like the morning light to many a weary heart, we address as "Morna," and their youngest, saint-like child is "Grace" to all.

To all my companions—except my beloved, to whom I was still Blossom—I soon became "Lyra," and by this name I am designated in my spirit home.

"Lyra," said Morna to me, not long since, "father wishes you to undertake another task in connection with earth. Do you think you can do it?"

"That depends on its nature," I replied; "I would undertake almost any task at the bidding of *Benefice*; for I look upon your father as a patron saint. But what is it I am to do?"

"Return to earth, and through a medium he has chosen as your instrument, reveal the story of your life—the experiences of your spirit, to mortals."

"And is *this* trial in store for me?" I asked, overwhelmed at the lovely spirit's request.

"Not as a means of self-abasement," she rejoined, "not as a process of humiliation to *you*, dear Lyra;

you have risen above the necessity of all such experience,—but for the instruction of mortals; that the people of earth may learn something of the conditions of spirit, and understand that not all at once can an erring soul step from its earthly state of unhappiness to the beatitudes of heaven. In telling your own story you will necessarily introduce that of others, and reveal to your readers—for it will appear before the public eye—the slow steps by which those who err reach the kingdom of truth and righteousness.”

“In that case I will do as your father desires; provided I need not mention names or aught that would identify my personality, and cause mortification to my earthly friends. Otherwise I will try to do the part assigned me.”

“Thank you, Lyra, dear; father chose you because he understood your powers. You will not be required to reveal anything you wish to conceal; simply tell your own story and leave the results with God.”

And thus I have been guided to this medium, through whose agency I place the record of my life before the children of earth. I have sought to deal faithfully with my subject. I have detracted from nothing. I have embellished no tale. What I set before you are the simple facts of a spiritual experience. Truth is ever stranger than fiction, more potent, more telling, for it is of the spirit, and is lasting, while fiction is of an ephemeral order that decays. I have sometimes felt myself limited by the confines of mortal speech in describing to you the conditions and the surroundings of my spirit. I have been obliged to use

terms and expressions that mortals are familiar with, and yet to me they seem very inadequate in describing the life of an immortal. I have confined myself to simple language, that all who read might comprehend what I had to say, and because the most startling facts may be revealed in simple form.

I will now bid you farewell. What my future experience will be I cannot tell. Possibly I may have to again come in contact with earth to work out some appointed mission; or among the dwellers of heavenly heights I may pursue my work in peace. Whatever my lot or labor, whether it be cast among the saints or whether it be assigned me as a teacher among the unredeemed, I shall rejoice in the knowledge that never more, under any circumstances or conditions, will my soul become so deprived of self-respect, so filled with unrest and gloom, as to feel itself *Outside the Gates*.

NOTE. — The spirit who has revealed her heart history to you in these pages is now a pure and holy being, whose entire work is given to the elevation of humanity. That her story may convey a grand moral lesson to the souls of those who read, is the prayer of that spirit band to which belong both she and

“BENEFICE.”

WHAT I FOUND IN SPIRIT LIFE.

PART ONE.

My earthly life was like a sweet and beautiful dream. The youngest of three sisters, petted and caressed by the two elder and protected by the tender love of father and mother, I knew not the real meaning of sorrow or care, and every day was fraught with sunshine and gladness to my heart.

My home was in Boone County, Kentucky, and my father was that dear, good man who, under the name of "Benefice," published some time since a series of articles entitled "Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint." My mother was the sweetest, most harmonious spirit I have ever met: moving about her household with gentle grace, everything she touched seemed to acquire a new beauty and interest. She had a kind word and helpful hand for all. Even the poorest, humblest person in our neighborhood found sunshine in her presence, and aid to grow more refined and gentle by her example. My sisters were like father and mother combined—the embodiment of peace, serenity and thoughtfulness. With such associations, and surrounded by the comforts and advantages of a well-regulated home, I passed the few years of my earthly existence.

In the midst of gladness and joy and all things that are beautiful to a young heart making its acquaintance with life, the great experience came that changed all things for me. Death found me full of buoyancy and mirth, yet I did not quail before him, nor did I fear to answer his summons.

I was sailing with some young companions on the waters of a great lake, when suddenly an accident befell our boat, and we were precipitated into the water. There was a struggle, and then the conviction came to me that there was no hope; just as one of my companions said, "Susie, we are going to be drowned!" such a calmness had come upon me that I had no terror at the thought, and I replied, "I am not afraid to die, are you?" One of our little crew was saved to tell the story, but the other two drifted into the great Unseen Land to find new experiences and to form new conceptions of life.

As I felt myself sinking, sinking beneath the waves, I heard a sound as of many voices singing. The tuneful melody rolled over and around me, and I seemed to be caught up by some invisible power. I felt myself rising above the water and floating high up in mid air; yet I saw nothing. Steadily rising and floating along, the sound of music still in my ears, a feeling of tranquillity, of ecstatic peace, filling my whole being, I was content to exercise no thought, no volition of will, but to drift along wheresoever I might be moved to go.

After a while, however, I became conscious of a dim, rosy light stealing through my closed eyelids; the sensation of floating ceased, and I sank back upon what seemed to be a mass of clouds, so soft and vapory did it feel. What followed can hardly be described. I did

not fall into dreamless sleep, I was aware of my condition; I knew some change had come to me; I could sense the soft breezes and sweet odors that played around me; yet this state in which I was wrapped was certainly one of repose, of restfulness to every part of my being. How long the magnetic slumber lasted I cannot tell, but after a while I felt it loosening its hold upon me. Soon I opened my eyes, and moved my hands and feet, then turned and gazed around me.

My bed I found to be a mass of fine white flowers — tiny cup-shaped blossoms filled with fragrance — canopied over with vines of tender green. The air was balmy, and a summer-like stillness pervaded the place. The atmosphere had also a peculiar, pinkish tint, soft and delicate and exquisitely lovely.

I examined the one long garment that covered my person from shoulder to feet. It was snowy white, of a closely woven, soft, filmy fabric, lace-like in appearance, yet shining like the foam of the sea, as it fell in folds around my form. On my feet were slippers, or rather sandals, white, like the robe, but bound with silver cords. My auburn hair fell unconfined around my shoulders, and I felt like a bird, blithesome and light and free.

As yet I had not begun to wonder at my appearance or surroundings, but like a child accepted what I found, without question. But soon I aroused, and peered through the openings of the vines. I saw that my little arbor was in the midst of a large garden, that was filled with beds of flowers, and winding walks, and tiny lakelets, and arbors, and rockeries, and fountains, and sculptured forms. There were people walking about

the place, men with grave faces and serious eyes, and women with gentle looks and tender smiles. I saw little children, too, playing among the flowers, and I began to wonder what enchanted grounds were these.

With the exercise of thought I seemed to summon human companionship, for at this moment the most beautiful woman I had ever seen parted the vines and looked in upon me. She was fair, with large hazel eyes and chestnut hair; but while her features were regular and clearly cut, it was more the expression of tender goodness that illuminated the whole face that attracted my attention, than the mere beauty of countenance.

This lovely being made herself known to me as my teacher and guide. She was one of a band of spirits who had long been the guardians of my earthly home. She herself had ever been closely attracted to my mother, and had attended her through her various life-experiences, being especially near to her at the hour of my mortal birth, and taking charge of me from my infancy up. She it was who had borne me above the dark waters to this fairy bower in the Summer-Land, and left me here to recreate my powers and vitality. I soon learned to know and love this benign spirit, so like my own mother did she seem in many little ways; and I was glad to be taken to her home as a beloved inmate.

I despair of describing to you the beautiful abode of my preceptress. Like herself, it was elegant without being showy, lovely without seeming luxurious, and pure as a tender heart could make it. The dwelling, though commodious, was as nothing compared to the grounds in which it stood; they were very extensive, and beautified as well by skilful art as by nature. No

one could long think of staying within doors while such delightful spots invited him, and the inmates of that home passed most of their time pursuing their studies and labors amid the fragrant blossoms, or by the sparkling streams of their spacious grounds.

Two other young girls, not too far from my own age to be companionable, formed part of my teacher's family, and I soon became very much attached to them, sharing their studies and participating in their plans and pleasures.

I had now entered upon a new experience. This great wide world of spirits, filled with earnest, zealous, intelligent human souls, each one bent upon the acquirement of knowledge or the performance of some important labor, created an interest in my mind which grew and thrived and never slept. As yet I had seen nothing of pain, and sorrow and misery, and I gave no thought to them. There everybody was good, and loving, and lovable, and I was glad to be taken in among them.

But gradually, through the sense of novelty and interest and delight that filled me, came another sensation—a yearning that was like a pain. I knew I was in heaven, the most beautiful spot of which I had ever dreamed, but I grew restless amid the glory and the joy. I wanted my mother. I wished to see the dear faces of father and sisters, and I longed to be at home once more in the old familiar place. My teacher saw my sadness, and invited me to go on a little journey with her. We were not long, and when we arrived at our destination I found it was my father's house.

I moved about among the inmates, but there was an

air of sadness in those walls that I had never felt before. Upon my darling mother's face I saw new lines of care, and a white look of suffering that had not long been there. I knew what it meant. The youngest member of that flock was missed from the home fold. The vacant chair told its story only too well to those who gazed upon it, and while the hearts of the others mourned, mother's was breaking for the tender lamb — her baby — who had been snatched from her by the cruel waters.

I tried to comfort her; I nestled by her side, with my arms about her neck. Father believed I was there, but the others did not know. I sang to her, and in the hours when her bodily senses were wrapped in slumber I gave her messages of love, and told her of my heavenly home, so she became peaceful. She never complained, but she never again lost the touch of sadness from her smile that made it so sweet and tender.

I found I had a new mission — to go among those I loved on earth and seek to comfort them. And from the pain and grief I found in their hearts I learned something of the sorrow and woe that touches humanity. A great pity filled my heart for all who are sad and lonely, and I wanted to help them. I could not take the same entire satisfaction in the heavenly life that had been mine for a brief season, knowing there were sorrowing hearts in need of a comforter, and I longed to find the way to bear that needed strength to their souls.

I found many lessons to learn beside those derived from a study of books, or from an observation of the stars, or a research into the natural kingdom. From an

inspection of human nature itself I was to gain the most important knowledge, the highest revelation of truth, that my soul had ever entertained.

The homes of spirit life are not subject to decay. They do not grow yellow and time-stained, nor do they crumble away at the touch of age. On the contrary, they last as long as their inmates require them; and through the ages they only show signs of greater beauty and comfort, as those who inhabit them grow in power and knowledge and goodness, and thus gain the means of adding to and perfecting their habitations.

During the many years of my spiritual existence I have seen a number of homes that at first were humble and plain, and even rude, grow finer and grander and more beautiful as their inmates rounded out in spiritual culture, perception, and achievement; and I have never seen an instance where a soul, however lowly he might be, who really desired and longed for a home, failed to find the means and the opportunity and the assistance of earning one. It depends upon the individual himself whether his home will be glorious or without attraction, and none need be homeless and without love who are ready to make efforts to secure and to *deserve* these blessings.

It did not seem very long to me before I was told that an aged aunt, whom we all loved and honored, was to come to the spirit world, and, in company with dear ones who loved her and whom she would be glad to meet, I hastened to bid her welcome and to conduct her spirit to its new abode. What a host of bright presences were on earth around my mother and dear Aunt Mary in that quiet hour. Gently and tenderly they touched

the spirit of the aged one and drew it from its casket of clay. There was no struggle, no pain. She simply fell asleep, to open her eyes upon the beaming faces of loving friends. The benevolent soul had always held her ideas of life and death and election and sanctification and conversion, very strictly and unyieldingly, but in reality she was too tender-hearted to consign any human soul to perdition, and she pitied the forlorn and unfortunate, and was always ready to do them good.

Her spirit home was prepared out of the materials of her own life. It was fair, and cool, and pleasant—a place where one might rest his weary heart, and find relief from pain. Thither we conducted her, leaving her to the enjoyment of a needed rest, through which there came a rejuvenation of the life-forces, a building up of vitality and spiritual power, that transformed the face, lined with the marks of age and care, to one of beauty and freshness.

Henceforth there was another home open to me in the spirit world, and it was ever a joy to visit that peaceful abode, and observe how quickly dear Aunt Mary adjusted herself to her new life, and how ready she was to drop her old ideas and opinions whenever there was something better to be had in their place.

I was still attending school in the spirit world, still eager to learn all that was possible of the wonders of existence. No branch of study was closed to me, though my teacher guided me in the selection of those I should pursue. My time, however, was not all passed in this manner. There were fond associations drawing me back to earth, and keeping me constantly employed in striving to bless those I loved. In addition

to my parents and sisters, and others dear to me, there was one, a sad-hearted, world-weary soul, near to me as a beloved brother, whom I sought and found, and whose mind I endeavored to turn to a consideration of spiritual things, knowing that I could bring him a knowledge that would brighten his life.

I have already said that my life on earth was one of sunshine and joy. Its brief span was filled up with the pleasures of existence, and unmarred by its cares. I had held no intercourse with sorrow, and I knew nothing of worldly strife. It is true I had known that sin and misery and wrong-doing exist in the world; but never having come in contact with them, my ideas of such evils were vague and undefined. But I was destined to learn more of these conditions of human life, and to perceive from my spirit state not only the effects they produce on their victims, but in many instances the causes from which they grew.

My first pain as a spirit came to me in witnessing my mother's silent grief over my early death; and my first efforts as a comforter were made in striving to assuage her sorrow, and to envelop her heart in an atmosphere of peace. From that experience a conception of the suffering of other human hearts dawned upon me, and I sought to aid those whom I found bowed in woe. This one phase of human discipline was good for me; it brought me *en rapport* with my fellow-creatures, and taught me of the shadow side of life. I had slipped from the mortal ere the stern realities of existence had laid hold of me, and was as one without experience, deprived of discipline, able to enjoy the sunshine and freshness and fragrance of the spiritual

world, it is true, but unfitted to cope with its grander, more lofty studies, unprepared to understand the vital springs of human life and action, and undeveloped in those attributes of endurance, patience and perseverance that awaken in exalted minds an indomitable energy to labor unceasingly for the elevation of man. I had not gained strength through discipline. I was a delicate, fragile, loving child, not the grand, benevolent, self-asserting, self-sacrificing woman, that one endowed with my heritage ought to become through contact with the experiences and discipline of a stirring, active existence.

I believe it is well for a mortal to desire and strive to attain many years of life, to make those years as active, as full of experience, as energetic and as fruitful of good results as possible. The discipline of earth prepares a soul for its promotion to a higher life. Yet the spirit who passes from the body in infancy or early life is not deprived of an opportunity of gaining its needed education in connection with physical conditions, and in contact with the various phases of human experience on both sides of life. From my own observation, I am satisfied that *every* soul must learn something of the sorrows, the pains, the bitter struggles, the disappointments, in short, the *trials* incident to human progress and development, ere it can truly enjoy, appreciate and understand the vital activities and the glorious possibilities of its own nature and the advantages of its future home. These distressing though potent lessons must be gained by actual experience. No soul can learn them for another; each one must cope with them for himself, and master the intricacies of each lesson, in order to

comprehend the delicate machinery of human being, and to become fitted to labor and to grow.

I believe each one has an experience of suffering as well as of pleasure to undergo, the whole making up a grand and important discipline for the spirit, a beautiful picture of light and shade, a rounded sphere of day and night, of sunshine and storm, cultivating, refining and strengthening the powers of the soul. Many find all sorrow, all pain and deprivation and misery on earth, and have to wait until they are transplanted to the more genial clime of the immortal world, to find sunshine and peace. Others have alternate seasons of joy and pain, of promise and despair here, and uniformly develop all their faculties as they go along. And still others have all sunlight, and seem to know nothing of life's discomforts and trials.

The more harmonious, tranquil and sweet a human heart, the less will it be jarred by the annoyances that afflict more angular individuals. There are souls even on earth so pure, sweet and beautiful, as to never know the taint of sin, or be swayed by the evils of passion; they are loving, gentle and kind; but even such souls cannot go through life without pain. Though their material circumstances should be such as to raise them above want, their sensitive souls must sorrow at the knowledge of the world's misery and evil, and they cannot rest without constantly striving to aid the unfortunate and enlighten the ignorant.

I think I have shown you my conviction — that it is a necessity for the human race to rise to greater heights by endeavor, and through struggle and trial. What is true of the race is also true of the individual — none are

exempt from the law. Somewhere, and in some form, every soul must learn of affliction, and thus know how to treat it in others, as well as to learn from its opposite, joy, the ecstasies of perfect peace.

I did not know the meaning of life till I had suffered. I had been happy, but it was the merry, careless joy of the inexperienced child, not the grave, serene and exquisite peace of the unfolded, cultivated woman. There is a difference in these two stages of happiness which all who have reached a state of tranquillity through suffering will understand.

As the wonders of the heavens and the earth spread out before me, and I realized my littleness, my ignorance and my inability, I grew eager to learn, to explore, to gain wisdom. Vibrating between the two worlds, drawn to earth by the friends I loved there, and attracted to the spirit world and the home of my teacher by my spiritual nature and by my desire to know more of its secrets and its lore, I saw many conditions of human life, and met with people—spirits and mortals—of every phase of character. Those who were bright and beautiful among the spirits smiled upon me, the tearful and heavy-hearted looked wistfully. I was drawn to these sad ones; it made my heart ache to see their anguish, and in my feeble way I longed to help them.

My mute sympathy, and the great desire of my soul to comfort the mourning spirits, going out to them in waves of magnetism, seemed grateful to them. They accepted my compassion, and it brightened their hearts. Yet I knew not how to aid them. Sometimes I found their sorrow caused by the despairing grief of friends on earth who mourned bitterly for their "loss," and

whose unreasoning woe covered these spirits with a pall of unhappiness. Sometimes the pain was caused by mortal friends of these spirits, who were going astray, and listening to the seductive voice of evil, thus causing untold anguish to their unseen friends. Others were grief-stricken because of their own misspent lives; they had become conscious of their past wrong-doing, and were anxious to retrace their steps. All these I could pity, and to all I spoke kindly. It pleased them when I did so, but I did not know how to afford them any practical relief. My weakness and inability were a constant source of sorrow to me, but there were self-poised souls at hand—wise and exalted beings—ready to teach the ignorant and befriend the unfortunate, and I was glad to see them hasten to their assistance. I wanted to be like them, a helper, a teacher and a guide, and I determined to use my time in studying human needs. Thus through the pain coming to me by the woe of others I felt the quickening impulse to study and labor for mankind, rather than for self alone.

I sometimes saw spirits who were wild, disorderly, and with a reckless, unrestrained air. I shuddered at these, and feared them as if they could do me harm. I shrank away from them, although I saw other bright spirits ministering to them. All this was a revelation to me. Secure in my father's harmonious home on earth, or happy in my teacher's delightful abode on high, the thought of evil had made no impression upon me. But here it was before my eyes. Here were human beings, corrupt and depraved. Yonder were other fellow-creatures, sad and sorrowful. Spread out before me on earth were homes in which pain and want, or woe in some

form, held the mastery over human lives. Truly I was eating of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and the revelation, though important, though necessary to awaken my mind to a comprehension of the forces of life, was a shock to me. It gave me pain, it made me uneasy. I am now thankful that the truth came to me; it was best that my ignorance should be dispelled; but at the time the experience was severe, and my mind grew unhappy and bewildered.

Impelled by my own desire to know of life, to study human nature, and to understand the different conditions of mankind, I had been drawn out into these various circles of human woe, and the pain I received was the price I had to pay for what I found.

Wherever I went, on earth or apart from it, where there seemed to be an atmosphere of sadness, of distress, or of evil, I always felt a protecting power over and around me, as if no taint could come to me, as if no danger could harm; and while I was grateful for this uplifting power, and felt secure under it to travel wherever I felt urged to move, yet I rebelled, too, that it did not extend to those poor unfortunates and lift them away from harm and out of evil. I did not then know that while heavenly love and beneficence are ever operating through exalted souls to draw mankind upward, yet the germ of goodness, the desire, the aspiration for heavenly life, must first spring out of the individual and cause him to turn toward it in spirit ere he can be aided by others.

I sometimes grew faint and weak at the revealments that came to me, and then I found rest and peace by my father's side, in the dear old home I loved so well.

He was a student and a philosopher, and from his calm, strong mind I gathered many pearls of thought and wisdom, that settled my doubts and eased my aching heart.

I did not spend all my time in the wanderings of which I write, nor were they really wanderings. This knowledge of men and things came to me naturally. I met these people in my travels between my earth friends and my Summer-Home. They came across my path in different ways. I saw mortals, I went into their homes, and beheld their mode of life. I did not go from curiosity, but from a desire to see, to learn, and to be of use. All these mortals had spirit friends; some were bright and joyous, others sad and despondent. I became acquainted with them, and learned their condition. My commiseration for suffering induced certain of these spirits to show me others who were more unfortunate. So my sphere of observation widened, and my knowledge of humanity deepened, while the desire to grow strong, and wise, and useful, that I might do something to lighten the load of misery entailed on the world, strengthened constantly.

Turning from the pictures presented to me — and all were not sad, in connection with earth and its environments — to my lovely spirit home, my soul would gain new power of understanding. My teacher, ever kind and loving, afforded me all the sympathy I craved. From her and from other wise spirits I derived many needful lessons; and they also extended to me that magnetic support that enabled me to go out on the missions of inquiry and of attempted labor that I sometimes undertook.

In these years I was growing, developing rapidly a woman's heart and brain and soul, and the very trials — spared me on earth, but permitted me by a wise Providence beyond, of beholding actual scenes of want and misery and wrong, and of reading the struggles of human hearts as depicted upon them in lines of pain — were ripening my own convictions of truth, giving me strength of endurance, and preparing me to undertake a work to which I felt called by every law of my being.

My mother, my beautiful mother, had come to the spirit world. Loving hearts mourned her on earth, but oh! how we of the higher life rejoiced when she ascended to our home. I was the first to meet her as she passed from the body — I, her youngest born, for whom she had yearned so deeply! I shall never forget the joy that transfused her features as she recognized me, nor the happiness of that embrace that held us so long.

My mother's spirit home had been prepared in anticipation of her coming. It stands upon the summit of a hill, commanding a fine view of the delightful country. It is large and roomy, and filled with charming nooks and corners, and furnished with exquisite taste. It is surrounded by lawns and gardens, while at the foot of the hill gleams a sheet of crystal water. The apartments belonging exclusively to my mother were from the first almost perfect in finish and appointment. She had completed her life-work well; had indeed profited by experience and grown wise through discipline. She did not need to go back to earth to learn; but it has ever been a pleasure to her to return earthward to influence the hearts of those she loves with a brighter power and a holier thought.

I did not at first take up my abode with my mother, for I had many studies to pursue under my teacher's guidance; but in a little while I did so, for my parent yearned for my presence. And so we settled it that Vesta, my teacher, should be with us when she could.

It did not take long for my mother to learn all about my work, my studies, my anxieties and my plans, and I found in her an invaluable helper. She could have almost wished I had remained ignorant of the evils of life, knowing how their knowledge must have pained me; but as she realized how anxious I was to become a messenger, a ministering spirit to the needy, she felt I was called to the work, and she did not object. A pure spirit cannot be contaminated by evil; he or she remains pure and incorruptible, even though in the midst of iniquity, and the *power* to do good is never lost. Therefore no spirit who desires to bless and enlighten the ignorant and degraded need fear to put his desire into practice. The purity of his motives is a shield and safeguard for him against all harm.

My mother herself was full of sympathy and compassion for the unfortunate souls of either life. She accompanied me in my missions to earth or to the lowly of spirit life, and her active charity soon led her to find ways and means of uplifting, encouraging and befriending those she reached. Many a poor woman, whose heart had been crushed and broken by its contact with the rude world; many a weary one who prayed tearfully for endless oblivion; many a sorrowing soul, bereft of hope and faith and almost reason, because of the misfortunes drawn from a misspent or abused earthly life — have been saved to a higher conception of existence,

and assisted to gain a better condition, by my helpful, loving mother.

One woman we found — a haggard, wild and weary-looking being. She had been a suicide, killing her body; but she could not murder her soul nor quench the light of memory. She had been cruelly wronged on earth, and she hated all men. Poor thing! how we pitied her! At first we could do nothing with her, but at length, by her tenderness of manner, her sweetness and her strong magnetic sympathy, my mother succeeded in persuading the woman to confide in her. The work was triumphant; mother gave her hope, encouragement and cheer, made her feel better, found a home for her among gentle, sweet-voiced women; and now that once unfortunate soul is a helpful, cheerful woman, spending her time in befriending those who are storm-tossed and distressed.

Coöperating with my angelic parent, I gained the strength and power I sought. This enabled me to reach the needy, and help them in such ways as other spirits were doing. I could not only speak the kindly, pitying word I had always been ready to give, but I could exercise a magnetism upon them that wrought its effect in tranquilizing the turbulent into peace, or stimulating the inert into activity.

PART TWO.

IN my first paper I mentioned one on earth who was as dear to me as a brother,¹ and how anxious I had been to reach him and to lead him into the pathways of spiritual truth. This friend had often been a loved and welcomed guest in my father's family, and I learned to admire and love him when I was but a mere infant in years. When he was absent I watched for his return, and ran to meet him when he came. I lavished upon him all the sisterly affection and tenderness I would have given an own brother if I had had one, and the greatest sorrow of my brief earthly life was in bidding him farewell as he left our home for an absence of years.

I never saw him again, for just before his return I went away to make that visit which terminated so suddenly for me in my transition to another life. But I did not forget my friend. I loved him with all the sisterly affection of the past, and I wanted to help him. In my visits to my old home I sometimes heard of him, and I sometimes found him, too. He was a sad and silent man, and as I entered more fully into his life I could see that a burden pressed heavily on his heart. I longed to comfort him, to show him the light, and to whisper to him of his little sister's sympathy and watchful care.

Through my great sympathy and attraction for my

¹ James Gordon, then of Cincinnati, Ohio; now of the higher life.

dear brother — as he must always be to me — I entered so closely into his sphere and attended him so constantly, never closing a day but some hour of it had been spent with him, that I became his guardian spirit, and was privileged, in my weak and feeble way, to guide him in his journey through life. He was a man of energy, of strong mental power, and devoted his mind to the pursuance of a business career. His iron will and perseverance led him to ignore the thought of failure, and he labored night and day to accomplish the end he had in view.

In following my brother through his career I came in contact with many people of the world, and with strange spirits who attended them. I saw material life in its strongest light. I beheld men struggling for wealth and power and influence, pushing and crowding, and in their business transactions ignoring the courtesies due each other, and even neglecting the law of justice. I saw how a life passed solely in the effort to accumulate worldly grandeur and wealth made men selfish and hard and harsh toward their fellow-beings. I noticed that hearts naturally warm and tender grew callous and rough in the great whirlpool of business life.

It was through this experience that I gained my first practical knowledge of the selfishness and hardness and injustice that humanity may reach, and the lesson gave me pain. A great fear also came upon me, almost stifling me with its intensity. I trembled lest the dear brother whom I loved so well should also grow exacting and grasping and dishonorable through his contact with the great rushing, roaring tide of material life. I

prayed that he might be saved from that. I implored the loving Father to hold him safe in his holy keeping, and I struggled with all my little might to cast an influence over him that would prevent him from forgetting his manhood in the search for wealth. Other wise, brave spirits heard and helped me, and we were permitted to guide him through deep waters of trial and temptation. How largely his success in remaining just and honest and upright, in preserving his honor, and in dealing magnanimously with those in his employ always through a long business career, was due to his own inherent sense of right, and how much it was increased by his watchful spirit guides, only the Great Judge himself can tell; but I reverently and prayerfully believe that through his ever earnest desire to be honest and "square," and through the intense wish of his spirit friends to help him in this way, a power was given them from above to lead him safely through temptation.

But while I found no cause to weep over the wrongdoing of a brother, yet my work gave me opportunity of witnessing many sad and sorrowful scenes in connection with others.

The men whom I found thronging the highways of commercial life had fathers and mothers, or brothers and sisters, or wives, or children, or friends, who loved them in the spirit world. In many instances the cares and confusion, yes, and the tricky complications of trade, upreared such a wall around these materially-minded men that those spirits who loved them best could not get to them. These spirits were sad and unhappy to see their rightful places taken by other spirits—men and women of keen insight, of business

capacity, of a questionable sense of right and justice, drawn to the mortals through the exercise of the same passions, propensities for gain and selfish seeking for emolument, that had swayed them when on earth—spirits who had not grown above the physical condition, and who watched and interfered with the changes and chances of the commercial career of those whom they approached.

I have seen a spirit mother weep tears of agony over her son whom she saw deliberately planning to swindle his business associate. She could not warn him, she could not prevent his dishonorable deed, but she knew of it and mourned. I have seen a loving spirit sister grieve unceasingly over her brother's wrongdoing, as he from week to week abstracted large and small sums from his employer until his sin was discovered. And I have known of many cases where pure and good spirits have wept and prayed over their erring ones on earth.

I remember a sweet young girl, with face as pure as an angel's, and heart as loving and warm, whom I met. On earth she had been betrothed to a young man who then seemed to be all that honor demanded of him. She died, and he, after a few years of drifting about, settled down to a business life. He was finally made cashier of a large mercantile house. He had gained the confidence of his employers and the respect of his associates. But in an evil hour he entered into some speculations that promised well, and to continue them he "borrowed" certain sums from the safe of the firm. His peculations grew larger, and continued until an inspection of his accounts by an engaged expert

revealed the truth to his employers. He was arrested, tried, found guilty of embezzlement, and sentenced to a term of years in prison.

The beautiful spirit who loved him followed him through all his various experiences, sorrowing, seeking to save him from evil, and to uplift his heart above the thought of sin. But the desire to be rich, the ambition to be great, had been too much for him, and when he yielded to temptation instead of struggling against it, he closed the door between his soul and the assistance that holy influences can give.

Yet his loving friend did not forsake him, not even when she saw other spirits, earth-bound, impure, selfish, come between her soul and his; but, biding her time, she waited and watched for the reaction she felt was sure to come.

Such a soul as hers must have owned a lovely home in the higher life, but she was content to turn from its attractions to attend the man she loved, and to help him refind his manhood.

Feeling a great compassion for this sweet lady—one that filled me with pain and brought tears to my heart—I watched her, and after a while made her acquaintance, and learned to love her. We are very good friends, and at rare intervals I have been privileged to be of use to her in her mission. Some time since the sentence of her friend expired, and he was set at liberty. Bowed down by shame he left his native land for another country. How changed was his appearance! Bent in form and haggard in feature, with sunken eyes and prematurely gray hair, no one who once knew him could recognize him now.

She, the love of his youth, is beautiful and fair to see, she died, and her freshness was kept; he sinned, and his youth fled with his honor. But he is now earnestly striving to do better, and to retrieve his past, and she has grown happy in helping him to find the better way.

I once saw a spirit father, tall and proud and fine-looking, bent almost to the earth because his son on earth had betrayed and ruined a womanly heart. And I have known of a spirit brother who followed his sin-stained sister through years of mortal anguish, with love and sorrow in his heart, until at length he rescued her from the jaws of evil and lifted her to the spirit world.

I have been in other places and seen mortals bending beneath their load of physical pain, or material want, or crushed by other terrible burdens, and have seen spirit friends weeping with them.

At first, when a knowledge of all these things came to me, I wondered how it is possible for a loving God to overlook it all and permit it to be. And turning to the bright Summer-Land from the scenes of poverty and strife below, I questioned why some of its glory and comfort and power could not reach and bless those ignorant, unfortunate souls. It was not till I learned to trust in the goodness and wisdom of the Supreme Spirit, that I realized the truth that suffering humanity is struggling toward the light, which through its very endeavors it will surely reach; as the lily, struggling amid the mire of the pond, eventually bursts through the gloom and blossoms in the light. Like children crying in the night, human beings reach out in the darkness of trial for a protecting hand. As the loneliness

and fear and sense of personal helplessness come to them, they learn to call upon a higher power and to rely on diviner aid. Just as surely as the timid child will feel its parent's hand, and know its earthly guardian is near to bring comfort through the night, so the weary soul, afraid of its own darksome or lonely environment, will receive an answering response to its cry and find the helper near.

There is but a thin veil between the two worlds, and the glory and warmth of the higher shines downward for every mortal who sincerely asks for heavenly aid.

We may study books and become cultured as men and women of letters. We may search into the mysteries of natural law, or seek instruction from the physical universe, and become learned *savants* whose dictum will be taken as scientific truth. We may grow wise and knowing and conceited from what we gather in this way. But a thorough study of human life, an analysis of human action, an acquaintance with the depths of human nature, and a study of the wonderful mechanism of the human mind made through personal observation and experience, will do more to enlarge our conceptions of life, to develop our sympathies, quicken our perceptions and arouse our activities, than all we can learn from books; while the training we thus receive will take all the conceit and sense of superiority out of us, for by it we learn that all men and women are brothers and sisters, and to feel it the duty of the enlightened and happy to assist the unfortunate to find knowledge and peace.

When we see the depraved and impure soul vainly striving to cope with its terrible surroundings, we are

filled with pity, and we desire to help him get free from the passions that assail him. When we find a heart broken from the world's neglect, we long to comfort it. When we see a life floundering in misfortune, we want to buoy it up; and so our sympathies are cultivated, and our zeal for the accomplishment of beneficent works is awakened. And then, if all the while we know there are grand souls above us constantly busy, who do not disdain to labor unceasingly for the benefaction of humanity, it stimulates our efforts to be of use, and at the same time makes us humble and meek in spirit.

The warmest impulses of the heart, the highest aspirations of the spirit are stirred, and the strongest elements of character are deepened by contact with human nature; and so indeed "the best study of mankind *is* man" in every department of his being.

What I found in spirit life was something more than a beautiful home, kind and loving friends and teachers, delightful surroundings, opportunities to study literature and the sciences, and many other like blessings. All these were given me, it is true, but I also found a knowledge of human nature; practical information of the capacities of the human mind for entertaining goodness, and of its power to deteriorate into evil tendencies, was supplied me.

I learned how mankind *could* suffer; how many of my fellow-beings gained success and peace and spiritual grandeur only after long years of painful toil and effort. An education such as I could not get on earth came to me "over there," though many of my lessons came from pilgrimages to this world of yours. The knowledge often gave me distress. The sorrows I missed in the

body crowded upon me here, because of the misery I saw but could not avert. I was shocked, unhappy and sad.

Yet the experience was good for me; in giving me to understand how the human heart could suffer, it made me feel compassion for every troubled soul. As I have before said, I believe all will sometime know what it is to suffer; if they miss it in one condition of life they will find it in another. So all will sometime know what it is to be happy and free. The law of justice would not be complete without such a discipline for all instead of a part. Suffering may come in different ways. Mine came through witnessing the dreadful experiences of others, but it was none the less keen and severe. I reverently believe that God's purposes are wise and grand, and that he molds each life according to its highest needs and for its greatest development.

Years came and went, but to me time had no significance save as it recorded achievement or failure, or opened opportunities for greater efforts, or taught me lessons that I needed to learn. Changes had fallen upon some of those I loved on earth, yet, while I knew of their experiences, I had no cause to grieve over them, for I could see each change was tending to ripen the individual powers, and to perfect their tree of life.

Among other events, however, occurring among my friends, there had been one of vital importance to me; one that bore pain and grief to bereaved hearts on earth, but that only brought sunshine and joy to my spirit home. My beloved eldest sister had come to me. My queenly, beautiful sister—how delighted I felt, even though I sympathized with the weeping mourners below.

My sister at once took her place in our harmonious home on the hill. It was not long before she became fully acquainted with our mode of life, and deeply interested in it. She desired to join us in our work, but while we were glad to have her company and assistance at all times, yet there were especial duties and cares calling her back to earth life that she could not neglect. Among the dear ones she had left were tender young souls in need of watchful guardianship and guidance, which none other could or should supply but herself. And so the work of my spirit sister was many-fold, divided between important lines, and always performed with love, fidelity, and a conscientious sense of duty.

After my sister joined me I seemed to get along more speedily in any task I undertook, and especially did I observe this if she was with me, planning and helping in the work. Afterward we learned that "Morna," as I shall call her—as that was the name the higher spirits gave her—was a medium, a sensitive, susceptible being, who could receive and radiate magnetic light and power from spirits who dwelt in even more advanced worlds than ours, and that through this faculty of hers the powerful beings from beyond could aid and guide us in our labors.

I shall not tell you how we discovered this important truth, nor of the unfoldment of her mediumship, nor of our experiences with celestial spirits, as I hope to persuade Morna to tell these wonders herself at some future time; but it is true we did learn this and how to profit by it.

Henceforth the way was smoother to us. We were not able to accomplish all our desires or to fulfill all

our plans, but we saw many completed, and the way to the fulfillment of others was open to us, so that we could see the end; and thus my mother, my sister and little Sue made up a trio of spirits who were ever ready at the call of duty, and who, under the direction of wiser intelligences, found ample scope for the exercise of their powers, and many opportunities and occasions of teaching and befriending the needy and unfortunate.

In the pursuit of congenial studies and the attendance to important tasks and duties, time continued to speed along until it brought another addition to our spiritual household. My father, strong, manly and grand in nature as in physique, had never neglected an opportunity of informing his mind on useful subjects, or of exercising his mental abilities in important ways. Thus he had kept abreast with the times, his mentality had been kept in training, and his mind had remained vigorous to the end.

His life on earth was long and useful; all around him felt that a good man had been taken when he was called home. His spiritual nature, like his moral character and his intellect, was richly developed. Death brought no fear to him; he was prepared to meet it. He believed in a future life; he believed the deeds of the body govern the condition of the soul in passing beyond. He realized the truths of spirit communion. Many times had I paused by his side for a draught of love and remembrance from his fatherly heart, and been gladdened by witnessing the thought in his mind that his "little Susie must be near," and to know it made him happy.

And so, full of years and honor and ripened experience he came to us, and what ineffable joy he brought to the three women on the hill. How grand and true he seemed, and how he settled down at home at once. There was no questioning surprise in his looks, no wondering inquiry in his tones. He had simply *known* all along that he should go home to his wife and daughters when the time came, and he had at last come to his own.

Neither was there any long sleep or slow awakening of spiritual forces for him; he was on the alert at once—quick to see and understand, ready to grasp the lessons that came to him. We could not teach him; his mind went in advance of ours, and seized truths that we had not begun to comprehend. And so he became our instructor, and we his willing, loving pupils, content to learn of him the lessons he gained from a higher research into hidden things.

And now our household was indeed a blessed one. True, one of the members of its original band, a dear sister and daughter, still dwelt on earth, but we knew in the fullness of time she, too, would come to take her place with us. And so we took up our duties of life, happy and grateful for the reunion of hearts and of life-purposes that, after earth's fitful, changing discipline, comes to all kindred, harmonious souls in the eternal world.

I have said that my father was an earnest thinker and a zealous student. The bent of his mind and the training of his intellect led him to inquire into the sources of things, and brought him into association with many brilliant and advanced thinkers of the spirit

world. He was one who, while remaining a student, could still become a teacher in his turn, and it was not long before he was busy with a class of pupils who sought the knowledge he had to impart.

On earth every branch of instruction or labor has among its followers and teachers those who are not qualified for or adapted to that especial line of training. Thus, in your schools there are teachers who have no faculty for the profession, whose heart is not in their work; their pupils are dull and listless, and never show their best powers under such tuition as they receive. There are physicians whose medical knowledge may be profound, but who do not meet with that success in their chosen field that others do; and so with every other department of human industry. There are other tutors who achieve the grandest results, quickening the minds of their pupils, and training them to understand their studies and to develop the highest mental activity; as there are doctors who bring the best results to their patients.

In spirit life no one undertakes to follow any profession or pursuit unless he is adapted to it. He who can awaken the human mind to an understanding of its needs, to a knowledge of its ignorance; who can stimulate that mind in its desire to grow and to learn; who can make his lessons clear to his pupil, and quicken his perceptions, so that he can understand his teaching, is a natural preceptor, and none but such are found in the other world. Such a teacher is my father, who finds his best work in teaching those who come to him for instruction.

Under the guardianship of such a bright spirit I felt

my inner powers increase, and I knew that greater spiritual strength had come to me through his presence.

Each one of our household had now his or her especial duties and labors; no spirit can fulfill the mission of another. Each one must work out his own plan of life. No more harmonious and loving family than ours could be found, nor one whose inmates could be more eager to learn.

In this great physical universe of yours there is so much to learn from its various kingdoms and departments of science and philosophy, that mortals quite despair of learning even an infinitesimal portion of earth's secrets. In the spirit world there are not only the sciences and philosophies of the outer universe to understand, but also the laws and principles of thousands upon thousands of spiritual sciences, and the secrets of countless worlds and conditions of human life to penetrate. As the spirit advances, however, it does not become stupefied as the facts of this wondrous existence appear before it, nor does it feel overwhelmed and disheartened at the tremendous mountain of knowledge it has to scale.

A consciousness of his ignorance gives an impetus to his mental powers, and stimulates him to grasp for more light. Yet he learns not to take up more at a time than he can assimilate and comprehend. A little learning inspires him to gain more. The thought that he has mastered one subject, or thoroughly learned one lesson, electrifies him, so that he is strong and able to attempt another. There is an exhilaration in the pursuit of knowledge or the performance of labor in the

other life, that ever refreshes and never fatigues. This quality, imparted to the spirit by its works, tones the mind and strengthens the heart and makes of life a perpetual joy.

Time passed. What were months or years to those who had a definite object and aim in life, and knew that sometime all their plans would be fulfilled? Yet I will not say I was not sometimes impatient and anxious to more speedily find my purposes accomplished. There are rare souls who are never impatient, never rebellious, nor discomforted; but who, exercising their powers and labors constantly for the elevation of man, wait God's own time for the perfection of his work, — but sometimes we who have not arrived at their state of exaltation cry out, "How long, oh! how long must we toil and wait for the golden day?"

As we found one spirit after another rising from a condition of ignorance and impurity to one of intelligence and honor, our hearts rejoiced at the goodness of God. But no one of the great band of missionary workers could retire from the field, for fresh arrivals of unfortunates constantly appeal for help and instruction. So the work goes ever on, as it must, until human life on earth is so purified and enlightened that it will send no more degraded and turbulent spirits from the mortal state.

In the midst of effort and toil for spirits, we never for a moment forgot our loved friends on earth, nor did I relax my endeavors to reach my dear brother with the torch of truth. What time I could snatch from my duties elsewhere, I devoted to him, and from my attendance upon his steps I gained much experience and learned of many things.

At last, oh! at last, after more than thirty years of waiting and of effort, circumstances arose that enabled me to come into conscious communication with that beloved one. He became interested in Spiritualism, investigated it, wondered why he had ignored it so long, received evidence of a future life, of the love and watchful care of his ascended friends, and found a new meaning and a joy in life such as he had never dreamed of before.

To my brother came many revelations from the unseen world. Spirit hands unlocked for him the door of the tomb and gave him wondrous glimpses of the land beyond. The visitants from above moved cautiously at first, lest he should grow bewildered by what they produced. But as he became familiar with the thought that really death was but a harbinger of joy to humanity, they came stronger and brought their lessons that he might begin to learn here and now. To him light came, before which life assumed new proportions; in its rays the struggles and turmoils of this world were shown to be the stepping-stones to a higher, calmer experience beyond. He could bear the ills and burdens better, knowing that the sad minor strain below is but the prelude to a loftier, grander pæan to be chanted by and by.

But if thanksgiving and joy came to him through the door of spirit communion, none the less did rejoicing fill the hearts of those who had waited long for this day. We were happy. My soul was filled with triumph, for what I had longed for had been accomplished. Henceforth I labored with a new song in my heart. The way seemed lighter and easier to me, and

I felt convinced that as this work had been accomplished, in God's good time all other useful and good things would come to pass.

I am still pursuing my work in connection with spirits who are wiser and stronger, and who give me guidance. I love to enter the homes of the lowly and the oppressed, and bear to them a magnetic breeze that will inspire and console them. I am pleased to touch the hearts of those mortals who are susceptible to such influences, and quicken them with the desire and the determination to help the needy and raise the lowly. I am happy if I can be present at the death-bed of a mortal whose life has been full of misery, and by my exertions open the eyes of that person to the possibilities before him, and it is heaven to me to show such a one the means and the way to reach a pure and happy home.

I am only one of a vast multitude of spirits who have learned the great lesson that not in the pursuit of personal ambition or gratification, not in the attention to self-interest alone, is the greatest happiness found, but that in the attention to soul-culture, added to the pursuance of helpful works for our fellow-beings, do we find such reward for our doings as brings to us an increase of enjoyment and a power of perception such as nothing else can give.

I recognize my weakness and my littleness, yet I know I can do my part in the great work of life. Unit-ing with the good and true, I can draw a blessing from them that reflects its power on what I undertake. Thus every soul that is earnest and zealous will find its hands and its mind full of work. Means and ways will be

provided for the accomplishment of all lofty ends. We can be content to wait the fulfillments of time, if in the meanwhile we do not lag nor waste our talents.

No amount of labor, no stupendous task, no unscaled mountain of knowledge need discourage us. Eternity is before us in which we may do and dare, attempt, strive and achieve, with the consciousness that we are a part of the universe, and that all it contains is ours to explore and understand; that we are God's, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We may press on daily and forever, unfolding our powers and possibilities to eternal perfection.

I have only given you a faint conception of some of the states, conditions and lessons I found in spirit life; they may be few and imperfect to what I may find later, but they have enwrought within me a deeper thought, a holier conviction of life's significance. I only trust they will show to some one on earth something of the earnestness and the **deep** meaning of human existence.

PART II.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages comprise many of the writings of that beautiful spirit who, by the interesting stories she has given to the world through the mediumship of Miss Shelhamer, has become known to the readers of the *Banner of Light* and others as "Morna." Under the influence and inspiration of this pure and gentle being, the mediumistic amanuensis claims that she has received the concluding or second part of this volume, the larger portion of which has never before appeared in print. "Morna" is the eldest daughter of "Benefice," that wise intelligence whose "Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint" opens this work with an appealing and certain sound in behalf of the outcast and the waif. She, together with her parents and youngest sister, Susie, has long devoted her whole soul to good works, and it is with the hope of teaching mortals of the life and immortality of the spirit, that she has undertaken to give these writings to the world.

It will be remembered that in her series of articles entitled "What I found in Spirit Life," Susie mentions "Morna," but declines to explain how that name came to be applied to her sister, as she hoped at no distant day to induce her to tell her own experience. Subsequent to the appearance of Susie's articles in the *Banner of Light*, "Morna" did come to her medium for the purpose of writing out for the friend — then in earth life —

to whom this volume is dedicated, an account of her spiritual experiences in the other world,¹ and for the first time this history now appears in print under the title of "Morna's Story."

"The Blind Clairvoyant," the story which closes this volume, also here finds publication for the first time, and we are assured by spirit Morna that she has faithfully applied herself to the task of instructing mortals in the laws of mediumship throughout its pages. In all their communications with their beloved friend, James Gordon, the spirits composing the band most deeply concerned in the preparation of this work, have ever expressed themselves tenderly upon the subject of their former estate and surroundings on earth; and in the fall of 1884 "Morna" gave to that gentleman through her medium the following little poem — under the name by which she was affectionately known on earth — and which shortly afterward appeared in the columns of the *Banner of Light*.

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME.

BY SPIRIT BELLE.

Fond Memory turns her magic glass,
And lo! fair pageants swiftly pass

¹ Private note to James Gordon, penned at the beginning of the narrative by its spirit writer: —

"Dear James: — I will try to tell you something of my experiences in the spirit world, and to give you such thoughts and such reminiscences as seem to me to be instructive. Should the eyes of my loved sister or of my own darlings ever fall upon these lines, may they feel that they have emanated from a *spiritual* source, and that there are indeed, 'more things in heaven and earth,' than they have ever dreamed. May God's light rest upon you all. Belle."

Of scenes long gone, of distant days,
When life was young and bright always.
I see again those childish years,
Undimmed by either doubts or fears;
I see the far-off emerald slopes,
Where blossomed all my earliest hopes.

Once more I view Kentucky's streams,
Her landscapes, fair as pictured dreams,
The herds of cattle, ere they pass,
Pausing to graze the sweet blue grass;
Once more the gleam of tasselled corn
Recalls each sunny summer morn,
When birdlings carolled in the trees,
And flowers perfumed the balmy breeze.

Again I see the homestead dear,
Where love dispensed its own good cheer;
The ample walls, around which grew
Roses of every shade and hue.
There we could beauteous fancies weave,
When oft, at summer's dewy eve,
We lingered on the roomy porch
And watched the glow-worm's fitful torch.

Oh! Memory fair brings back to view
A vision of that home-life true,
Where peace and harmony combined
To guard each budding youthful mind.
And gazing, I behold again
My parents fond and sisters twain,
Who spread for me a flowery bed
Where'er my footsteps chanced to tread

Kentucky's slopes are fair to me,
For there remains the old roof-tree
Beneath whose gentle, kindly shade,
My earthly happiness was made.
There, seated by my father's side,
Deep wells of knowledge I imbibed,
And lessons of eternal truth
He taught us in our early youth.

Oh! years have passed, and now I dwell
Where angels' praises grandly swell,
Amid the fair green fields on high,
Where buds and blossoms never die.
But still I turn in thought again —
Bound to the past by Love's bright chain —
To old Kentucky's hallowed spot,
Where I enjoyed my earthly lot.

MORNA'S STORY.



CHAPTER I.

FIRST CONCEPTIONS OF SPIRIT LIFE: ITS HOMES, GOVERNMENTS, AND COLLEGES.

MANY years have passed since I was called from a pleasant home and the tender embrace of loving hearts, to enter upon the experiences of an unknown world. I had not the light to guide my footsteps that brightened the pathway of my father. He could part with his daughter as he had parted with other precious ones, calmly, quietly, and with heavenly resignation; for he knew there would be reunion, peace, *home*, beyond the tide.

I had no fear of death, I dreaded not the hereafter; but only the loftiest souls — or those who have grown into the deep knowledge of spiritual things — who can reason, and realize that life beyond is but a continuance of individual experience and affection and hope, can contemplate the parting with their most cherished ones without a pang.

I had tender ties to bind me to earth. There were home duties and family needs to hold me. Little lives needed my care; human hearts longed for my continued

presence; yet I could not linger in the body, and I was forced to let it go.

As I drifted out into the Great Beyond, I was conscious of the clinging love that grieved to have me go. At the time, could I have chosen, I would have elected to stay with those who needed me. Yet my dear ones were blessed. Those to whom I intrusted the care of the helpless were faithful. The heavenly Father has guarded all whom I love, and has led them on in peaceful paths. I have no sorrows over the experiences that have come to them; I feel that they are guided more wisely than finite beings know.

Though I might have preferred to remain on earth, I did not enter the higher life in a state of rebellion. A deep feeling of peace, holy and uplifting, filled my soul as I passed out into the new condition. Even before I lost full consciousness of my physical surroundings I felt a divine presence, and ere the sounds of mortal life were wholly stilled I saw my sainted mother, holding out her arms to me as though I were a little tired child; and I heard her familiar voice calling my name in accents of tenderness and joy.

I wished to tell my dear ones on earth what I beheld, but had not the power, and they could not realize the celestial beauty of that vision breaking upon my quickened sight. Close by my mother stood Susie, — little Sue, radiant as an angel of light. I did not remember that years had passed since she flashed out of our lives, for she appeared as youthful and blithesome and girlish as when I last bade her good-bye.

It is impossible to describe in your language the awakening of a spirit in its immortal home. I remember

that my mother gathered me in her arms, and that she and Susie seemed to bear me somewhere away from the grief of sorrowing hearts. I yielded to the charm of their presence, and like a tired babe dropped into a light slumber. With my mother I was at *home*. Whatever the conditions, the locality, or the surroundings might be, to be with her was to be at home — was to find *rest, peace, heaven*.

I awoke in a large apartment, the walls of which were hung with silken draperies of white and blue. I lay upon a wide, soft couch, facing a large opening in the wall around which twined a delicate, slender vine of creamy bell-shaped blossoms. Through this aperture the gentle breeze strayed, bearing to me the odor of these perfumed cups; and every draught of this scented air, like a sip of some invigorating cordial, inspired me with vitality and strength.

I gazed around me upon the crystal walls of my apartment. They were clear and transparent, and through them I could see the waving trees and flower-gemmed grounds beyond. At regular spaces there were openings through which one could step upon a wide veranda. The walls were panelled, and each panel was encased by copings of carved ivory, from which blue and white draperies depended which were now caught back by silver cords. The articles of furniture of the room were elaborately carved and finished. They were evidently designed both for utility and ornamentation, and were very beautiful. I learned from my mother that I was now in her spirit home and that here she had prepared a place for me; at which news I rejoiced indeed.

I soon became accustomed to my new surroundings. The apartment of which I have spoken was but one of many in my mother's mansion. It had been assigned to me for my especial use; and within its crystal walls I passed many hours of peace, and of silent study and reflection. I speedily learned of many lessons that I must study. I realized my utter ignorance of any life apart from mortality, and how incompetent I was to mentally grasp the actual, sentient, individualized life around me. At first I was almost in despair, there was so much to learn, so many things to understand; but quickly I came to know that the human soul is capable of infinite expansion, and the effort made in applying the mind to study strengthens and stimulates its powers of perception and of understanding.

But there were ties, longings and affections drawing me earthward. Memory, sympathy, *love* were alive in my heart, and the dear ones in the mortal were my constant thought and care. I wanted them, as I felt they wanted me; and I *needed* to be with them, even as they seemed to require my presence. I yearned to clasp my darlings to my heart, for it held an aching void as I missed the external tokens of affection that had been a part of my life; and in visiting the earthly homes of my cherished ones, I longed to have them feel and know and welcome my presence.

This was before I became fully endowed with the spiritualities of my new condition. In time I came to love as *spirits* love, bestowing tenderness and sympathy and affection upon the dear ones, by sending influences to soothe and strengthen their hearts, inspiring their minds and increasing their aspirations. Then I grew

contented and peaceful in knowing that I could always watch over and minister to the spiritual needs of my loved ones, until they should join me on the heavenly side, and in the realization that their lives must always be a part of my life, as mine must be of theirs.

Spirit love is the outgrowth of that affection which human hearts develop for others on earth; but it is less exacting, more patient, peaceful and benign than when disturbed by the elements of physical life. Serene in its consciousness of immortality, this love expands, deepens, and becomes strong and happy in sending out its influence toward its objects, knowing it must meet a sure return. The love of the spirit is not violent, though filled with activity. It is like a tender, penetrating power, that flows out to its object and blends with the atmosphere of its beloved. It is like a radiant glow, that spreads from the soul life of its giver to the heart of its recipient, warming, invigorating and glorifying all who feel its influence.

This I learned in time, and as I grew into more complete harmony with spiritual life, all weary yearning ceased, all restlessness was quelled, and the aching void became filled with a measure of peace. My tenderness found satisfaction in supplying its cherished idols with such influences and ministrations as a loving, watchful spirit is permitted to bestow; a task most gracious and sweet. I felt that these duties claimed me on earth, and I divided my time between my spiritual and my earthly homes, learning my lessons *there*, and bringing my watchful guidance *here*, to those who needed my attendance. After a while the very anxieties I felt over my own darlings led me to consider the

needs of others ; and growing out from the personal affections of my heart came a deep and tender love for humanity, that bore sympathy for the suffering, and a desire to bless the unfortunate.

This new awakening inspired me, and led me to work for my fellows. It brought me in contact with needy souls, and fitted me for a work in connection with more advanced spirits. I always felt a strange, subtle influence, when engaged upon any plan for others or when trying to devise ways and means for the alleviation of suffering. A strong power seemed to surge through my being at such times, helping me on to success, though I did not then understand it to be the inspiration from celestial kingdoms, that was directed upon and through me by wise intelligences for the fulfillment of their mission ; but such I learned it was.

Perhaps the greatest joy I found in coming to earth was gathered from the fresh, pure innocence of my precious little ones ; in watching the unfoldment of their spiritual natures, and the development of their physical charms. Perhaps the pleasure found in the attendance upon the more matured lives of my friends cannot be excelled in similar conditions ; but the deepest satisfaction, the sweetest and most harmonious associations, I found in approaching my dear father during the little time he remained on earth. From his spirit emanated an atmosphere of peace that was eminently tranquilizing to me. There was always a tender belief in his soul of the near presence and watchful love of his ascended ones ; there was an ever present welcome in his heart for those who came about him from invisible realms. Thus there was to me a compensating satisfaction in approaching

him, that was at no time dispelled, and from which I derived a sense of rest and recreation.

Those were years of far-reaching experience and discipline, that I know did much in unfolding my inner perceptions, in assisting my mental development, and in giving strength to my spiritual powers. My first practical knowledge of spirit life came through personal experience. At first it seemed strange to me to find homes, houses and lands, public buildings, governmental establishments and academical halls, in this new country. The homes I entered were finished and constructed like similar habitations on earth, only I noticed a degree of refinement of taste, a marvel of proportion and of finish, a symmetry of construction in their appointments, that betokened a higher advancement in culture and a grander creative skill than designers on earth display.

The public schools I visited were very much like the institutions of learning on the material plane, affording opportunities to scholars of all ages, and offering different grades of study in their scheme of education. But I noticed no pupil was crowded with instruction; each was assisted to enter the particular class of studies toward which his mind inclined, and encouraged to cultivate his mental taste, and develop his intellectual powers in accordance with the formation of his brain. No pupil was *drilled*, but each was rather unfolded in knowledge and understanding. The teachers were not weary-eyed, pallid, nervous beings, bringing no zest or enthusiasm to their work; but they were bright, vivacious, and filled with electric fire, each finding only joy in his task of training the human mind. Their influence seemed contagious, for the students in every department of

instruction caught from them inspiration and power that quickened their own ideas, and enabled them to grasp and to give an intelligent elucidation of the subject under investigation.

The governmental institutions of this new world I found to be regulated with care and precision. There was an absence of that political machinery that is manipulated on earth in your offices of state, through which rogues may gain control of important issues more readily than honest men. There is no "honor" in occupying public positions on high, save that coming from the consciousness of a faithful discharge of duty, and from the satisfaction found in the constant exercise of thought and energy for human welfare. No personal grandeur or laudation is derived, no private ambition gratified, no individual fame acquired, and no political preferment or glittering perquisites found by any administrator of the affairs of state. But as these trusts of the people are ever under the wise management of lofty counselors, it is impossible for intrigue, corruption or dishonor to creep within the public offices of the spirit world.

I considered it a privilege to be admitted into a large assembly where I could listen to the advocacy of wise and noble measures for the advancement of human interests and the exercise of human rights, and witness the proceedings of those ministers of justice and equity whose grand influence is felt in many lands. But when I beheld many *women* standing side by side with the male adjudicators, speaking words of wisdom, expounding law, and revealing their conceptions of human right and responsibility, I stood transfixed with sur-

prise. I then learned that it is a common occurrence for intelligent and far-seeing individuals of both sexes to meet in council on important matters, and that no distinction of sex ever deprived an intelligent being of the right of franchise, the exercise of thought, or the freedom of speech.

I entered halls and listened to the discussion of medical jurisprudence. I saw students busy with their experiments, — not with the scalpel and knife, nor with mineral substance or vegetable drug, but with the forces of nature; with vital electricity, with human magnetism, and with other elements. I learned that the medical schools of that land are turning out graduates versed in the art of healing, some of whom hasten to homes of suffering and hospitals on earth, there to impart magnetic forces to the afflicted in hours of need, while others go out to the sin-sick and distressed in spirit life to bear them relief. I was taught that the time is coming when mortals will be freed from the conditions of disease and pain; for the students of these higher colleges will find ways and means for the instruction of earth's people in the laws of nature and of life.

I was taken into grand temples where, through arches beautifully graven, strayed a softened light upon magnificent works of art; and I learned that all the beauty, all the symmetry and grandeur of art, of poetry and of song, as hinted at by artist and bard on earth, are stored in the human soul, and that as man advances in spiritual attainment, his power to express this ideal in external form increases. I have gazed upon wonderful forms of artistic creation until my being dilated

with joy. I have listened to the recital of poetry until it seemed as if the soft trickling of summer waters, the tender murmur of restless birds, the rustling of forest leaves, the shimmering of sunbeams, and the sweet harmonies of human love all melted into speech throughout those rhythmic lines. I have entered vast concert halls, whose walls were flooded with light, and all the place seemed filled with pulsations of glory; and in hearkening to the divine strains of some gifted singer or to the wondrous waves of harmony evoked by skillful performers from finely tuned instruments, have felt myself borne away to higher thoughts and grander conceptions of life than pen can picture.

In storied structure and in leafy grove I have listened to the lofty exhortation and the eloquent utterance of inspired minds until my soul has been stirred to its utmost depths; and through all these experiences I have recognized the spirit world as a natural world, — a *needed* world, a country that supplements and follows this earth planet as summer follows spring.

I did not at once understand that as earth is but one world in space providing its conditions for human habitation, so its spiritual counterpart is but another, which supplies means for the comfort, convenience and growth, as well as for the utilization of the forces, of its inhabitants.

It is as natural to find homes, dwellings, public establishments and other institutions there as here; to find signs of floral and vegetable growth, and a supply for every human demand. *This* is advancement; anything less would be retrogression.

There are countless worlds in space, each one fashioned and set in motion by Omnipotent Power for wise purposes and for utilitarian results ; and we are taught that they serve humanity in affording room to all the souls who are passing onward.

In coming into a realization of true spirit life, I was forced to divest my mind of its former vague, uncertain ideas of eternity. Happy the man who begins to learn of immortal life, and of the movements of spirits ere he parts with earth ; for in proportion as he gains knowledge here will he more quickly comprehend life there. Many a soul is dazed and perplexed at what he finds on entering spirit life, and must take time to shake off his ill-formed ideas, who would at once have seen and grasped the truth of his surroundings had he commenced to grow in spirit before his physical decease.

CHAPTER II.

TRANSITION IN THE SPHERES.

WHEN I found what my father had on earth tried to teach me—that the spirit world is a real world, and that the life of its inhabitants is sentient, vital and consciously individualized—I settled down comfortably to the conclusion that I had known all there was of *death*, and that I could never be displaced from my new condition.

But I had a new lesson to learn; not, however, until I was prepared to receive it without a shock of pain or a tremor of surprise. I may as well describe it here, although this practical illustration of what I had been told of transition in the spheres did not happen until after the experiences which I shall relate further on. I had studied something of the planetary life of our system of worlds, not exactly in the line of astronomical research that your scientists pursue,—although such a study is open to students in our world,—but from teachers who had gained their wisdom and knowledge from the actual inhabitants of those bodies in space. I have learned that life on these celestial planets is active, conscious, animated, and that human beings who dwell thereon have passed through grade after grade of spiritual unfoldment through successive transitions. These beings are refined and exalted in manner and appearance; and their conditions and surroundings, as well as their objective possessions, correspond in

beauty and delicacy with the glory of their spiritualized characters.

I am informed that these wonderful beings once lived on earth, reaping its discipline; that they passed on to the spirit world which environs this planet; that, after they had gained all the experiences required from such conditions, they ascended to still another world—there to live, labor, learn and grow, until they should ripen for yet another change. My instructor taught that as this had been the experience of such souls, so must it be of every one—myself as well as others—and in *this* way would humanity find endless progress as designed by Infinite Power. In every stage of such ascension the soul takes on new elements, so that its body or covering appears more and more glorified and ethereal.

In these studies I learned something of the law of reincarnation, and was taught that now and then a spirit is forced out of the earthly body, that has not gained its needed discipline through contact with matter. This being cannot possibly be satisfied to exist in spirit life, for he belongs *here*, and for him a law operates that assists him to reënter mortality by attaching himself to some unborn organism, and pass through the processes of birth, growth, discipline and death, eventually rising to higher things. Yet no soul is *obliged* to be reincarnated on earth who does not desire and seek for it; for those who are satisfied, who have had enough of physical life when they pass from the body, are the spirits who have been disciplined, and who have acquired from material things all that can be useful to them. There is no occasion for any soul to

dread, to rant against, or to impugn the law of reëmbodiment, for like all of Nature's decrees, it is a grand ordination, established by Supreme Wisdom, for the further unfoldment of lives that were crude and misshapen without its protection.

I have not forgotten that I was to record an actual experience that came to me in this investigation. First, let me say, that when the thought of further change, of other deaths, reached me, I realized that the span of life on your earth is but the beginning of an endless series of existences for the human soul. Only one thought disturbed me; if I was to die again, or if my mother or dear Susie should pass from my sight to higher realms, could I bear to be parted from them, and should I find them again? But the response that came from wisdom teachers quelled my fears. Had I not joined my loved ones in rising from material bondage? Had they not prepared a royal reception for me? Had we not the privilege of returning to watch over dear ones on earth? *Could* anything less than this be our heritage now?

Love is immortal, linking kindred souls by an indissoluble chain. If my mother should rise to a higher, sweeter clime, she could come to me daily to communicate with and guide me. The consciousness of her presence would be with me, for our conditions for mediumistic manifestations are more perfect than those of earth. She would prepare a way for me to join her when I became fitted for her home and companionship. The separation would be less than the parting between friends on earth when one starts on a journey of a few months for foreign shores; for to instructed spirits,

years of time in their life are but as so many weeks on earth.

I also learned that these higher transitions did not always take place singly. Whole families, even companies, of spirits have been known to keep pace with each other in the cultivation of knowledge, wisdom, and refinement, to such a degree as to be prepared to take their flight together; — as we see a class of pupils become qualified to gain promotion to a higher department at the same time. It dawned upon me that it might take centuries of time for a spirit to gain the profitable experience and discipline of a world like this of mine; so I had no cause for anxiety concerning the fate of my dear ones. So far from increasing my perturbation over this theme, its contemplation grew interesting to me; and when I was summoned by my teacher to witness the transition of a lofty soul, I gladly obeyed the summons.

The spirit was one I had often seen; he had been a teacher in the highest schools, and had mingled as counselor, friend and companion, with the grandest souls of our land. He had been listened to in our halls of justice, and was beloved for his great learning, wisdom and benevolence. His influence, like a breath of heaven, was felt by all whom he approached. While he had been thus useful as a teacher, an officer of government and a helper to all thinkers, he had filled a glorious place, also, as a missionary of light to unhappy, wayward souls, whom he had aided to struggle out of their miserable condition. The spirit did not appear aged after the manner of earth, where time leaves its marks upon the human form in furrowed lines and

trembling limbs. As you sometimes behold a softened, chastened expression upon the features of a truly good man or woman who has seen many years of mortal life, so upon this face gleamed a light which transfigured the features and glorified the entire person. "Almost transparent," you would say of such a countenance; and it does seem as if a celestial glory shines within it.

Only a few beloved students and close friends of this grand soul were present at the holy hour. He had looked for this experience; for although he had lived many centuries already, he considered them as but a few drops in the ocean of eternity. Now the summons had come, and he was about to enter on a higher career. We found him seated on a green bank at the foot of a favorite tree. It was in the garden of that temple within whose walls he had passed many hours in the elucidation of truth to eager minds. Only a fold of white and shining fabric encircled his form. His face beamed with joy, and one could not doubt that he already beheld supernal visions, so glorified was the expression of his eyes.

The friends of the patriarch knelt around him, while a solemn hush, as though the very air were bowed in prayer, pervaded the place. There was no influence of sorrow or pain; only an atmosphere of tranquil satisfaction and peace. Every heart knew that a ripened soul was to be gathered home, and there was no occasion for gloom.

I held back, reluctant to advance among the kneeling friends; but I was gently led forward by my teacher, in response to a sign from the sage in whose honor we had

come. Close to his side we passed, and knelt before him. How surprised, how humiliated, how awed I felt, as his hand touched my bowed head in benediction: "Daughter," floated the sentence from his soul to mine, "thou art a crystal vessel through which light from beyond shall stream in blessing to the people."

He then raised my head, and clasping my hand with those of my guide and holding them in his own, waited for what was to come. He had uttered his parting thoughts to friends, and I saw that the body seemed to be collapsing and shrinking, as if something from within was being withdrawn; and presently it fell backward against the tree. A few moments more, and the watchers were electrified by a marvelous vision; for there, standing before us, enveloped in light, his face more transparent than before, and illuminated by a glorious smile, we beheld the sage. We gazed with rapture for a time until he slowly vanished, and we knew that he had taken a celestial journey.

Tender hands straightened the vacated body beneath that favored tree, covering it with spicy boughs and flowers. For three days—as mortals measure time—loving friends lingered upon the hallowed spot, and then they returned to their homes, for the last vestige of the body, with its coverings, had disappeared; you could properly say it had dematerialized or evaporated. All had dissolved; their elements had been taken up in the atmosphere, to be utilized in other forms.

When the soul principle had departed, the chemical properties holding the atoms in place being withdrawn, the body had but to resolve into its original gases. There was no corruption, no residue of matter to

dispose of, no burial, — so perfect are the processes of disintegration in our world.

This was to me a mighty lesson, and gave much food for reflection. Neither my neighbors nor myself had ever witnessed such a case of ascension before, though all had learned of the like from the records preserved in our public institutions. It was an event of great moment in our vicinity, and served as a subject of consideration in our circles. I was informed by my teacher that in holding the hand of the sage, I had helped him to loosen his hold on the body he no longer required, for I was a medium, whose magnetism could be thus utilized.

So at times may a mortal medium be used in assisting a spirit to cast off its worn-out body. Or one may aid a struggling soul to retain its hold upon the physical, which still may be of service if renewed with vitality.

Change comes to the spirit through transition, for such is the word most fitting to apply to the event that sends a soul from one state of experience to a higher and a better. The word "death" is unused in that land where no open grave, no ghastly shroud, no coffin lid, awaken trembling fears and tearful sighs in the hearts that gaze questioningly upon them.

How very long it takes some minds to realize that life on earth is but one of an endless series of existences, and that every ascension is an advance and improvement upon the one that preceded it; and we account for this by the fact that in the beginning, on this planet, humanity must be but imperfectly impressed with the power of progress. A spirit may live

on earth a long time, and by devoting his energies to the accumulation of worldly wealth, and the gratification of personal ambition and pride, may have failed to gather that particular experience and discipline he was sent here to secure. In that case he is unfitted to pass higher. The child who fails to learn his alphabet and to acquire the first rudiments of learning, cannot enter upon a more advanced course of study. You may take him from the primary department and seat him in a room where profounder lessons are taught, but his mind cannot take them up, for its capacity has not expanded sufficiently. So the man who has not learned his mortal lessons and passed through the necessary experiences, may, through accident or disease, lose his physical body; but he is no better prepared to enter upon a higher grade of being, than is the uninformed infant to take up the more complicated lessons of the graduating class. If in seeking to remedy these deficiencies the man does not take advantage of the law of reëmbodiment, he will be obliged to remain in contact with earth until he learns and receives all that the planet has to give him; just as the child will have to go back to the primary school and remain until it learns thoroughly the lessons it has missed.

Having reaped its necessary discipline here, the soul can go onward and gain new unfoldments in a higher condition. It may be centuries before we shall be ripe for another change, — this new life has so much to offer by way of study and employment. Our bodies will not wear out here before we are ready to slip them off; nor will they meet with crippling accident, as sometimes happens to mortals; but we can continue to find

something new and good for our daily expansion. When the transitional moment comes it finds the soul prepared, and its outward form slips off as easily as a garment that has loosened and stretched falls from mortal shoulders.

Our knowledge of a world still beyond us is gained by the tidings brought us by its celestial inhabitants, who influence and inspire our mediums to convey their instruction to our minds. We do not fear their guidance, for these celestial friends are wiser, and can see more clearly than we. They have arisen above us, and their view of life and things is more comprehensive and grand; therefore we know that their judgment is good, and we can rely upon it. And as their instruments, our sensitive mediums, have each been fitted for their work by peculiar and soul-ripening experiences, as their natures are aspirational and truth-seeking, and as we aim to surround them with the purest and most elevating conditions, we do not hesitate to accept the teachings that are given through their agency. Thus are we aided in our care of mortals and in our work for humanity, by those celestial beings whose love for mankind deepens and broadens with their own soul-growth.

Mortals tremble at the approach of death, and shrink from its contemplation. There is so much uncertainty concerning the future in their minds that they do not court the experience the word is supposed to denote. Even those who have borne heavy losses and bitter pain, who are bowed with years, who cannot take an active part in the world's labors; even those who have learned something of immortality, and who have heard of life

in the spirit world — desire to stay on earth a little longer, and shrink from the change.

This is characteristic of physical life. This natural holding back is innate in the individual; it is the clinging of material forces to their system of manifestation, and it becomes useful to man; for were he eager to leave the mortal, did he *long* for the change that should raise him to another world, he would neglect his duties here; he would fail to care for his body or to cultivate his intellect.

But with us conditions are different. Nature is less crude and violent; her forces are in closer harmony with man; we can live so *en rapport* with her laws as to fear no illness, no accident. We know that we cannot pass to another world until we have reaped all the discipline, performed all the tasks, and gained all that is necessary to our growth in this sphere. We know whither we are going. Having passed through one death and survived, we are certain that future changes will only bring us grander power and sweeter life. Therefore, in place of shrinking from the new transition, we look forward to it joyfully, hopefully, and with satisfaction, in the meanwhile doing our best to enlarge our power, and increase our usefulness.

In the case I have described, it took the body of the sage three days to entirely resolve into the original elements; but we are taught by the celestials that in their world, when one passes higher, the body disintegrates at once when the life-force is withdrawn, and nothing remains for friendly attention.

CHAPTER III.

LANGUAGE, SOCIETY, LOCOMOTION, VEGETATION, IN
THE SPIRIT WORLD.

IN my first attendance at the colleges of spirit life I was surprised to find so little attention given to the study of the classics, so little time devoted to the acquisition of the languages, and so little thought given to what on earth is called "a finished education"; but I came to know that there is instruction and instruction. It is necessary for your students to seek a knowledge of the classics if they desire to reach the highest productions of those masters of music, of literature and of art, who flourished in ancient times. One who wishes to mingle with the life and thought of different nations must study the languages, in order to understand their people; while to move in polite society a mortal must be well versed in the arts, graces and accomplishments that such society recognizes and demands of its devotees.

To mingle with mortals in their various classes, it were well for a spirit to be able to communicate in more than one language; or in coming into contact with an earth-bound spirit who did not understand English, a higher intelligence might find an advantage in expressing his mind and in giving instruction to the lower, in the language employed by that unfortunate; and so we have schools whose tutors afford instruction in these and other forms to those who desire to enter upon such a course of study.

In the world where I find a home all speak one language; one that is simple in utterance, devoid of confusion and not liable to misconstruction. It is a language very much like the purest English spoken by the cultivated modern tongue; but it is an improvement even on that, being free from idioms and easily acquired and understood. So I had no use for French or German in which to express my thought by elegant phrase or guttural sound; nor did I find my neighbors employing other than the simple, delightful tongue that is characteristic of the spiritual life.

I have been taught by returning celestials that in the world beyond my present home external speech is not employed, for thought is conveyed from soul to soul and quickly understood. They tell me that thought has sound, for when it passes from one mind to another there is a soft, sweet tinkling like the chime of tiny silver bells, that reaches the ear and quickens the mind; but this is too subtle for us to perceive, and we cannot experience it until we gain a residence in a more refined body.

While undoubtedly all that instructs the mind on earth; all that opens to us the store-houses of past learning; all that cultivates the refined taste, that makes the soul beautiful; all that trains the intellect and develops a lofty nature; in fact, all the educational processes of earthly life — are advantageous to us beyond as well as to you here; yet *we* do not depend so much on mere book-learning as mortals must do. We are not obliged to study the classics for information of ancient art. If we desire to study and to grow *en rapport* with classical literature or art, we are brought, through our

aspirations, into sympathy with the great minds, the massive intellects, the masterly artists of either ancient or modern times, and from them we gain what we seek. Mingling magnetically in their sphere, we gather from their own personality the elements of their lives, their hopes, their achievements, and are quickened in perception and knowledge.

So in the unfoldment of the graces that belong to polite society, attention is given to the development of character. The spirit teacher exerts his influence upon the moral nature of his pupil, stimulating, encouraging, and assisting its growth. The attributes of love and harmony are acted upon. Affection and sympathy bestowed upon the pupil draw out love and tender sentiment in return. Lessons of human need and manly action develop a regard for the law of justice. High principles inculcated in the growing mind unfold rules of conduct that apply to right living and lofty ends. All *these*, acting upon the susceptible soul, bring out the graces of the heart, which are shown in the courteous demeanor, the gentle attitude, and the tender consideration of others that is the real essence and mainspring of those personal amenities so dear to society.

I do not have to impress upon my pupils in spirit life the necessity or beauty of always being kind to their playmates, of being polite to all they meet, of never scorning or offending their associates, and of doing all possible good. Through the attention bestowed upon their mental and moral education, these rules come naturally to be a part of their constant deportment, and are as easily followed as is any routine once adopted.

I have seen outcast waifs, neglected and scorned of

earth, coming to our life. Under the training afforded them here I have seen them unfold the loveliest qualities of mind and heart, and become pure, sweet, precious blossoms on the human tree of life.

When mortals realize that the cultivation of the graces belongs to the education of the moral character, instead of to the drilling of the mental perceptions, earth will bear a sweeter, kindlier race than it now enjoys. Many persons are now gracious in deportment before the world, who, in the privacy of their homes, or in their attitude toward their nearest associates, are boorish, careless, and unlovable. This is all wrong, showing that the heart has not been cultivated, but that only the requirements of society have been attended to.

In my spirit home I found various modes of locomotion. My neighbors and I walk about as do mortals. We have also vehicles of transit. There are boats or rather *floats* upon our waters — delicate shell-like skiffs, beautiful in form and of symmetrical proportions. We have aërial cars for gliding through the atmosphere at rapid speed. And we also have certain conveyances similar to your carriages, that are not however propelled by horse-power nor by mechanical force, — the electric motor being stored in compact form within the vehicle.

By the exercise of *will* we can glide swiftly along above the surface of our grounds, and thus travel without apparatus or conveyance of any kind — rapidly and without fatigue. But in the celestial world beyond, the mode of transportation is in advance of ours, inasmuch as its denizens have only to think of any special spot they wish to reach, and however remote it may be,

they are there instantly. Thought and will-force are the only propelling powers in that better land.

Our spiritual bodies are more or less dense, and require certain substances for their nutrition. This nourishment is found in the luscious fruits of trees and vines, and in the clear crystal water of our springs. These fruits are very mellow, sweet and delicate. Most of their compounds are absorbed into the system; there is but little residue or waste matter from them, and this is eliminated by exhalation; it possesses no odor and its passage through the pores of the system is imperceptible. This is also true of the water we quaff, which is very sweet and refreshing. This kind of nutrition, assimilation, combination, and elimination affords us no trouble, and to mortals may seem very desirable and agreeable. Through them we are kept in a healthy, vigorous condition, and are free from the pains and disorders that afflict man on earth. But as spiritual as is this manner of taking food, it is crude compared with that system of absorption which obtains in that higher world, from which we sometimes receive heralds of information, as you receive this budget of news from my home.

We are told that in the celestial world no substance is taken into the human system. The bodies of its inhabitants are too ethereal to support even the melting fruitage that serves us as food. Science may teach you that even the atmosphere of the physical universe holds in solution all the elements of life, all the atoms necessary to the sustenance of man. Chemistry can gather these elements, and by combinations form them into gases, fluids and solids, acids, salts or sugars, as the

case demands, and thus furnish what is necessary to the system.

Now, if this be true, how possible it is for the advanced souls of celestial life, who are versed in the laws and sciences, to extract from the atmosphere around them the elements necessary to the support of their refined bodies. The mere act of respiration fills the system with food, draws nutriment into the body, and feeds every part of the organism with power and energy. What a wonderful life it is!

The vegetation of my world is subject to the laws of growth and decay: for we see the leaves drying, falling and then *vanishing* in the atmosphere; and new shoots unfolding in their place. There is no cumbersome waste. Each particle that has served its purpose disintegrates into its original element; but still, there are growth and decay, waste and repair. In the world beyond mine there is no dying leaf, no fading flower. The vegetation fed by absorption, always appears the same, as it gains from the atmosphere what new elements are needed to renew its freshness and vigor; and it casts off in unseen exhalations the elements that have done their work and fulfilled their purpose.

You can thus perceive that while the conditions of my world are in advance of those common to earth, they are inferior to those which maintain life in that celestial world that swings in space beyond the orb on which I dwell.

I cannot tell you of worlds above that one which I shall enter on my next pilgrimage, for I have not communed with heralds from those diviner spheres of light. My celestial guides affirm, however, that in

advance of the country in which they flourish there is a supernal realm whose inhabitants are more beautiful and refined than tongue can tell; that the wisdom of the supernals is marvelous, but that even these wonderful beings do not consider themselves exalted, for they can tell of a still diviner life, toward which they are growing, whose denizens shine like the sun, and whose power would appear to us like that of God, so thoroughly do they understand the laws of the universe, and so well can they make use of them.

Truly, it is but little we know of life, but what wonderful faculties do we possess for learning, for growing, and for gaining power! The object of these writings is to record something of that spirit world inhabited by your ascended friends. In the homes which they occupy may be found peace, harmony and contentment. There they labor; there they will abide for long years, until they have gathered all that life can give them on that stage; there they will welcome each loved one who ascends from earth, and there they will teach those dear ones how to find the same conditions and unfoldments they enjoy.

I have mentioned the cares and duties I found in connection with earth, and the pleasure it gave me to discharge them. I have hinted that, growing out of my love for my own heart's treasures, came a deeper sympathy and affection for humanity at large. This led me to try to be of use to my kind. My mother and sister were constantly engaged in good works. They did not confine their ministrations to those who were brought to them, but they *went out* into the by-ways of life, seeking the needy and ministering to the suffering.

I was glad to join them, and we found that the greater the effort we made to help others, the grander became our power. The more wretched the case in hand, the stronger grows the sympathy of a helping spirit, and the more practical becomes its assistance.

On earth the innate benevolence of a man may lack power of expression, because of limited opportunity. He may be disposed to accomplish grand results for humanity, but what is really done may seem small to him, because materially he is cramped for means. With us it is different. Let a spirit really long to do good, and the way is opened. He prays for power to uplift the lowly and to give strength to the weak, and the power possesses him. He may search for the hopeless ones, and the means are supplied him to prosecute and bless that search with good results. Missionary work becomes an inspiration, and a force that produces fruitful effects, not only upon the one who receives but also on him who gives of his labor.

There seems to be time to do everything in our life. We are not hampered by the demands of an exacting body. The little we need is easily supplied. We do not feel that we must conclude a special work in a given time, for we have ages to look forward to, if they are necessary, to complete our labor. So, whatever plan we have on hand grows naturally, and eventually shows good results. It is true that our mission to earth is somewhat limited. We may desire to forward a certain movement or measure for the human welfare; may wish to establish a special truth, or to teach a particular lesson to mortals; if we do not attempt this work when the ways and means seem best adapted for it, we may

fail of our purpose. Our instrumentalities here are dependent on external forces, and we must use them as the power comes. Such work rests on *conditions*, finds time an important element, and human sympathy and coöperation on earth a necessary factor in its development, while the pursuits of the spiritual world alone are largely free from these limitations.

We can find opportunity for diligently attending to the needs of such suffering souls as we can reach; for taking care of the dear ones on earth whom we love; for studying such lessons and pursuing such investigations as attract our minds; and for the purposes of recreating our own mental and spiritual forces in witnessing inspiring scenes, and in the contemplation of works of art; in attending grand concerts and exhibitions of intellectual or artistic grandeur; or in other ways catering to the æsthetic needs of our inner lives.

I wish it were possible for me to describe to you some of the wonderful creations of art that I have beheld; or to give you knowledge of the grand harmonies that rise and fall in musical waves in our concert halls. I despair of doing justice to the theme, and so must content myself to wait, until, when the morning of a spiritual experience dawns upon your awakened vision, you shall visit the Academy of Music, and listen to those strains of harmony, so intense and sweet, that you will feel as if borne upon beams of light toward the very throne of God.

Pursuing our way, and caring little for the lapse of time, mother and sister and I went forward until my father joined us. What a welcome we gave him; and how joyfully we led him to the home and domain he

had won by a faithful life. How pleased and satisfied he was, but not at all bewildered. He was thoroughly alive to his surroundings, and when we asked him if he did not wish to rest, he gave us one of his grand smiles, and said: "No, I am not fatigued. This is rest, to be at home. I know there is something for me to do here. Why should I rest when I feel so strong and well? It is the weary who seek repose, not the vigorous man."

At once he entered with zest into new employments. He speedily found out old friends and near relatives, and entered into association with strong minds who were constantly working for humanity. He wished to explore the surrounding country, and did not lack companionship in his excursions. He was not content with merely glancing at a plant or tree; he wanted to examine or study its nature, and to learn its capacity for usefulness. So with everything he approached he meant to reach its height and depth, and know all there was to learn of it. With such a mind there was no stand-still; it was constantly pressing forward, bent on new acquirements, and fixed on fresh discoveries. Is it any wonder that he brought an inspiration to our home, that he supplied new life and power to each one of us? His personal magnetism cast an uplifting influence on all who reached its sphere, and fitted him as teacher, as guide, or as an advance guard for those who needed instruction.

He entered college and university; visited temples, mingling with the life and thought of preceptors and officers. He became a student of the sciences, as well as a teacher of moral philosophy, and in his work expanded his own intellect and inspired others.

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARING TO ENTER THE TEMPLE.

FATHER, mother, sister, friends ; a home of beauty and harmony ; school of instruction ; opportunities for study ; every advantage for the cultivation of refined taste ; the companionship of gifted minds, — all these were mine ! *Could* a soul be other than joyous and peaceful under such auspices ? Yet it is impossible in such a life to settle down to merely personal gratification or selfish contemplation and pride. The keener the sensibilities become, the more active grows a realization of human weal or woe. The more beautiful our existence seems, the greater swells our compassion for our fellow-creatures who have no such comforts ; and therefore one in our condition can find his chief happiness only in seeking to teach, to beautify, and to elevate the more uninformed and unfortunate.

This every progressive spirit feels, and so we have whole bands of such workers — united families, or congenial societies — laboring in concert for the interest of humanity.

In the course of our studies we, as a loving family, came to learn of worlds and of human lives beyond and apart from our own. In contemplating the plan of the celestial heavens, and learning of planet and star, of their position in space, and their relation to our own spiritual orb, we came to know that ours is but one of many, — all connected by a chain of electric force that holds them in place and vitalizes each one. We learned

that the inhabitants of those worlds are intelligent, advanced, highly cultivated beings, yet possessing the human attributes in their higher unfoldments; and that through these manly characteristics those beautiful souls are linked to our lives by the ties of fellowship and fraternity.

My father, from his early knowledge of Spiritualism, and with his unchanging faith, was very quick to learn of the higher worlds. He had no difficulty in believing that under proper conditions the inhabitants of those celestial heights could communicate with him and with us all. Learning of a company of neighbors who at stated intervals held séances for communion with higher souls, he made application for admittance to their number. This was granted him, and in a little while he became a regular attendant at those private meetings.

We observed that "Benefice" — for so he was called — was very quiet and preoccupied in mind after these sittings, and as I wished to learn the cause of his abstraction I questioned him. But I was not prepared to understand the truths that appealed to his mind and gave him food for reflection; and so at first he gently put me aside. As my observation enlarged under my mental training, as my sympathies quickened into life, I came to take an active interest in the reports I heard of so-called communion with unseen intelligences, and I sought my father for light; — not through idle curiosity, nor to confirm private opinion, but from a grave desire to inform my mind on an important subject. The dear soul then gave me of his wisdom, explaining to me under what conditions he had been initiated into the Temple of Communion, where undoubted intercourse

could be maintained with visitants from a more exalted world. Said he:—

“I have been told that one of my own little flock is a sensitive, through whose agency just such grand teachings may be received, and that the unfoldment of her powers is soon to begin.”

I was deeply interested, and urged my father to apply for my admission into the sacred council. It was not accorded me as readily as I had anticipated it might be, from knowing how easily he had gained access to its sanctuary. Word was sent that I must first pass through a period of preparation. I had not grown sufficiently receptive to an influx of celestial light; I must be ready to lay down any cherished opinion, when it came in conflict with higher truths. I had always the right to exercise my judgment and reason, but I must show that I could rise above early training without a struggle, and slip out of acquired habits of thought when they were proven false or useless. I thought I could easily do this, for I only wished for truth, and did not believe I should cling to opinions that reason had the power to explode, and so I urged my fitness to unite with the circle at once.

But no; I must show my earnestness for the work, I must prove to *myself* my power to come willingly under the direction of this Order. I must pass through a probationary period, and by devoting myself to purely unselfish tasks give evidence that my love for humanity, as a whole, was so great that I could forsake all things, and ignore all ties dear to me, to follow after truth. In my enthusiasm I thought I could readily do this, and I said, “Do with me as you please; I will submit.”

My father was appointed to discipline me. I was to be removed from my home and its family ties, and placed in a strange locality, among spirits needing care and training. I did not rebel, for I knew I should see my father, and learn from him of mother and sister, and of home affairs. Besides, I knew that my spiritual sight could discern from a distance those conditions that belonged to my real heart-life, and so I accompanied my guide without a murmur, and entered upon the trial. I asked how long it might continue, but they gave me no response.

Such distorted souls, writhing under the lash of conscience, as I met! Miserable creatures, hopeless, but with breasts wrung with fear and torment, and with faces scarred by the imprint of fierce passions. Sometimes I sickened at the sight, and when they would turn with savage mien from my attempts to soothe or comfort them, muttering imprecations, I felt as if I must flee from the place; but when one would listen, growing quiet, and seemingly impressed to make efforts for improvement, I would grow resigned to the situation.

I found many gentle, patient, tender missionaries here, with whom I could associate, and from whom I learned many valuable lessons. I also received frequent visits from my father, who brought me precious news from our home. I could steal away at any time to my darlings on earth, and so life was not devoid of joy and beauty.

But on one of his visits my parent said to me, "Daughter, I have instructions to leave you to yourself, and to cut off all connection between you and home. A magnetic influence will be exerted upon you that

you may see or know nothing of parents, sister or friends. Can you bear the trial?"

"It will be a heavy one, father, but, if it is not too long, I will not murmur."

"My dear child, do not deceive yourself; it may last for ages. A harder discipline even than that is in store for you; but remember, it is all for a glorious end."

I was a little doubtful; for, unlike my sire, I had not experienced the joys, nor had I been let into the mysteries of the sacred temple, and so did not *know* if the end would justify the preparation; but I said I would try to do my best.

And so I was left alone; but I went on, striving to be patient, and to put aside all thought of personal desire and comfort; only my visits to my dear ones on earth reconciled me to my tasks. How long the trial seemed! Time was everything to me then. I lived an age in what I found on my visits to earth was in reality but a few weeks.

But now my greatest affliction came, for I found myself cut off from earth and its dear ones. I tried to reach them, but I *could not*! A great gulf seemed to separate me from those I loved, and I felt bound to one place and to one condition. Then I learned what wise teachers mean when they exhort one to give up the world, to forsake all else to follow truth and duty, and to live a purely *unselfish* life. I struggled and rebelled. I lost interest in my work. All around me seemed a dark and hopeless void. I could not bear the strain, and I sank into unconsciousness. When I revived I was in my mother's arms, in our own dear home! I shuddered as from the remembrance of some horrible

dream, and clung to her like a frightened child. She soothed me, and under her quiet influence I soon regained my usual composure.

My father and friends were very tender with me, but I was uneasy. A sense of failure, of moral weakness, filled my breast. I was ashamed of myself. I knew then that I had all along been incapable of exercising pure *unselfishness*; and I also knew that I had not earned the privilege I craved. After awhile I again requested to be allowed to resume the trial, but my father thought me not strong enough, and I had to wait.

The time came when I again essayed to win the coveted goal, and I had to pass through the same and other painful experiences, but this time with success. I withdrew from all pleasant and congenial associations. I visited none — on earth or in heaven — whom I loved or who loved me. I even lost sight of other workers who had borne me company before in reaching the unfortunate and distressed. At first it was very hard and painful, but I tried to be patient. I pitied the unfortunate, and wished to help them. My compassion increased with my efforts. Those who were aided gave me grateful love, which inspired me. Those who turned away only stimulated my resolve to touch their lives with kindness. There came a satisfaction from this work, such as I had not anticipated, and it gave me power. I grew so *interested* in watching the unfoldment of earnest thought and manly repentance in misshapen minds, that before I knew it, a sense of real happiness enveloped my heart. The place grew light around me, and I found beauty where before I had

seen only gloom. In due time my trial ended; my father came for me, and I left my occupation with even a sigh of regret. It had helped me to grow, and to *know myself*.

* * * * *

And now I was prepared to enter the Temple. My father had not needed to pass through such a fiery discipline as I had met. The guardians of that sanctuary knew at his first approach, that should occasion demand, he could and would give up all thought of self, and go down into any condition of human life to work for its elevation. There was no necessity for him to prove his fealty to principle, his power of self-renunciation, and therefore no test was required of him. I had thought myself strong to do and to sacrifice, but events proved that I had first to develop strength, and expand in spiritual power, before I could accomplish the task assigned to me.

The auspicious moment arrived, and I was conducted to the place by my beloved father. The Temple—a large circular building of crystal-like substance—stood in the center of a green spot, where the branches of trees threw a quiet shade. The interior proved to be an apartment of circular form, which was provided with low seats. The light streaming down through rose-tinted crystals was soft and beautiful. The delicate incense of flowers pervaded the room, and an atmosphere of beauty hovered over the place.

There were about twelve persons present when we entered—male and female of equal numbers. These were seated in a circle around some kind of machine, such as I had never seen. This instrument shone like

gold, but it did not seem to be constructed of that metal. Each male form was robed in a long blue gown of soft and lusterless material. My father, after seating me, withdrew, but presently reappeared in a similar robe, and with sandals on his feet like those the others wore. Each female was clothed in white that shone with a peculiar light. My own dress was white and delicate, but unlike the garments of these devotees.

At our entrance the twelve arose and bowed, remaining standing until my father had seated me. On his return to my side after securing his robe, one of the number leaned forward and touched the instrument before us. Immediately there was a soft, buzzing sound, which developed into a delicious musical air, filling the room with its rich, melodious tones. As this began to sweep over me I felt a strange, electric sensation through every fiber of my being, — somewhat as a mortal feels when under the influence of a galvanic battery, save that this experience was less severe and intense, and far more soothing and delightful than that.

The music ceased, but harmony filled the room. I perceived that every sitter was filled with holy aspirations. My own mind was reverent and serene. Presently a lovely woman, with placid face and gentle air, poured forth a glorious invocation to the Source of all life and love. If anything was needed to complete the conditions for a successful séance, this prayer must have supplied it, for the atmosphere grew more beautiful and the influence more entrancing. Now, a form I had not noticed before glided into our midst, and

slipped into a vacant seat beside the instrument I have mentioned. She was a small, delicate creature, scarcely larger than a child, with bronze-brown hair and hazel eyes. Her form was encased in a robe of shimmering white which fell in graceful folds to her feet.

No one moved as she reached her place, and perfect silence filled the room as again that little form arose. Now in impassioned tones, not loud, but clear and thrilling, she addressed the assembly. There was a far away look in her eyes, and a dreamy expression upon her countenance. She was evidently swayed by some grand power, for higher thought and nobler utterances I had never heard. It was the soul of some inhabitant of a higher clime speaking to us through those inspired lips, and conveying truths to our minds. One of the sitters acted as a scribe, recording what was thus given to us.

As the discourse closed, the influence changed. A bright illumination came over the medium's face, and in quick, sparkling tones she addressed each one individually, giving advice or instruction according to the needs of the case. Turning to me she gently touched my head and shoulders, saying, "Thou art admitted to our band. Thou shalt henceforth be known as '*Morna*'—for such is *light*. As an instrumentality for a higher *Intelligence* and *Wisdom* thou shalt be a bearer of light to other lives."

A peculiar, thrilling sensation surcharged my being at the touch and words. Such a magnetic influence, filled with a power new to me. "Welcome your sister," continued the voice, and each one arose, and in united

tones all chanted a strain of welcome I shall not soon forget. "She is renamed for the celestial work; baptize the sister with light." My father led me forward to the mysterious instrument, placed my hand upon it and covered it with his own. The grand and impressive male spirit who had touched it at first, did so again, and it commenced to vibrate as if alive with motion. But this time it shot out rays of *light*; revolving circles of light; streams of light that fell upon and over me. They were warm and pleasant. Soon these forms of light changed to large disks radiant with colors. They sped together touching and intermingling, while a sweet harmony of sounds arose as if these very manifestations of electric power were singing a song of greeting to the novice. I only attempt to give you an idea of this experience, as it is impossible to depict the scene in mortal language.

"Clothe her in the robes of the council," said the entranced medium, and I was led to the recess of an outer court where I was divested of my garments and clothed in a lustrous white dress and shining sandals like those the other females wore. On my return to the séance-room I was declared a regular member of the circle.

Soon the lights waxed dim until we could but just discern each other. There was a little interval of silence. The medium came out of her exalted condition, and the séance ended. Again the lights arose and a period of social communion ensued. I was greeted individually by each one, and addressed by my new name. I felt perfectly at ease, for it seemed as if I had known these

people all my life, and yet but three beside my parent were familiar to me.

Before leaving those hallowed walls each one reassumed his usual garb, leaving the special robes to be unworn until the next meeting.

CHAPTER V.

DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIUMSHIP IN THE SPIRIT
WORLD.

FOR some time after my experience in the Temple I moved about as one under a bright and stimulating influence. Whatever I undertook by way of study or employment seemed especially easy to me. I had little difficulty in grasping my lessons, and my duties were performed more completely to my satisfaction than they had hitherto been. It seemed as if some divine power had infilled me; so happy, so tranquil, so harmonious had life become.

My father gave me more of his companionship — or, rather, I was permitted to enter more fully into his pursuits and researches; a privilege I was not slow to appreciate. The first experience inspired me to know more of the wonderful fraternity of the Temple, and I was very glad when a second opportunity came for me to attend its circle. It was held as before, and under similar auspices; but on this occasion, the sibyl, or medium, was a female who, as I was told, had left the earth two centuries ago. She was a large, handsome woman, with keen eye and brilliant smile. In herself she proved to be highly intellectual, but when under the influence of a masterly intelligence from a higher world, her utterances seemed to be *alive* with the force and grandeur of almighty truth.

As that medium gave forth words of wisdom, the

dimly lighted hall grew radiant with sparkling, flashing lights, that sped back and forth, touching each sitter, and thrilling all with a weird electric power that seemed to instil new life into their minds.

At the third séance our teacher was a man who appeared youthful with freshness and vigor, but I learned that he had dwelt in our world fifty years, and had passed from earth at the age of forty. At one circle my father was our instructor, and, surely, if a human being was ever inspired by holy power, he must have been on that occasion; so lucid, so eloquent, so wise were the lessons he drew.

And so at every séance we had a different teacher, until each member of the fraternity had been employed. All were not entranced by the intelligences guiding our researches into spiritual things; a few were so influenced; others were overshadowed by some returning soul from beyond; and still others were inspired by the great *thought* of the higher council, though not under the personal influence of any special prompter.

At every session I felt the same sweet, subtle power stealing over me. I learned that I was a medium whose powers were required by advanced souls, as they wished to impart important truths to our people through my agency. I obeyed the instructions given me to sit at home with my parents and sister for medial development.

It was some time before I passed into the magnetic state that heralded the approach and influence of an external intelligence. When I did so it was in my home, with my father by my side, and my mother and sister opposite. A soft delicious sensation swept over

me. I felt as if drifting outward on waves of sweetest melody. There was nothing around me but *light*—beautiful, pulsating, *wonderful* light.

Dimly I saw the outlines of a grand, majestic form, and, as one *looking down*, I saw him place his hands on my head. Then I understood that I had floated away from my body, and that I, my real self, was stationed above it. I did not feel disturbed, for, through the billows of light, I beheld a bright, elastic cord stretching from my outer form to myself, and connecting my thinking part with that body. I heard the sound of words, spoken in deep, rich tones, that carried a new strength to my heart; but the sound diminished, and I seemed to be swallowed up in light.

When I regained full consciousness I found that my father had taken down many pages of manuscript, which he said contained important matter that must be read at our next meeting at the Temple,—all of which had been spoken through my lips by the spirit I had seen. There was no jar nor unpleasant sensation when I awoke, but all was beautiful to me, and I felt as if I had experienced a most refreshing dream.

At the next meeting of our circle, our medium was a young and lovely girl who had passed from earth in infancy, and whose tuition had been gained solely in spiritual spheres. She was entranced by the same intelligence that had influenced me as 'above narrated. The spirit spoke of his experience with me, commending my father for his accuracy in reporting his former utterances, and then proceeded to repeat the matter which none present but father could know, reproducing exactly every word that had formerly been given

through my lips, as was afterward proven by my parent's papers. This was a gratifying experience to us all, and one unlike any hitherto met with in the Temple. It exhibited, the spirit affirmed, a remarkable similarity of mediumship between the two organisms he had used, for him to be able to present word for word the same discourse through the lips of both.

The wise one then announced that at our next session he should address the members through my lips. I confess to a feeling of anxiety and of mental nervousness at this, for I did not feel qualified to fill the position of teacher before that august assembly. But before that time arrived, I was again entranced at home, and made to feel so perfectly at ease, that I grew trustful, and gave the utmost confidence to my spirit guide, saying, "Do with me as thou wilt."

I was not conscious of the words, nor their import, which were delivered through my lips at the next council, but each member seemed highly gratified, and I learned that matter, to be sometime compiled for public use—concerning the celestial worlds and their inhabitants—had been presented, and that future work for our council had been marked out by the wise communicators.

After this we continued our "sittings" in our own home, generally with but our little family present, but occasionally with such guests as our unseen visitants directed us to invite. The influences continued to utilize my mediumship, and we received strong lessons, wise precepts, and valuable instruction from our ascended guides. We were given histories of departed races; records of advanced lives; data concerning people

and events on other planets; and we derived much information from this new educational experience.

My father always transcribed reports of our séances for preservation in the temple. As I have said, I at first knew nothing during the delivery of these records through my mediumship; but after awhile I found myself growing more and more conscious, and more and more *vitalized* at each sitting, until from a stage of unconsciousness, through one of partial dreaminess, out to a state of full realization, in which I could distinctly follow and enjoy the discourse during its delivery, I traveled step by step. Now, I seem to be *overshadowed* by the influence, when it comes. I feel its power; I am illuminated by its light, caught up and absorbed by its magnetism, and made to utter its thought, independent of my own volition, while at the same time knowing what is said.

Many times the celestials have influenced me in the Temple, and given their teachings to its members. At first I could get nothing from them, unless in my sittings with the family, or in the council at our temple — for I needed the presence of strong, magnetic, loving hearts, such as my loved ones gave; but now, I can at times enter into conscious communion with my guides when absolutely alone, for their magnetism surrounds and infiltrates my being constantly.

Spirits tell mortals that *their* mediums require sympathetic and magnetic support from congenial associates. This is true. The presence of one or more persons who are in harmony with the medium, and who are spiritually aspirational as well as magnetic by nature, will give to the operating spirits great strength

and power, that will enable them to accomplish greater results than they otherwise could.

In my father my guides found all the elements of helpfulness they required in unfolding my mediumship, and of him they made a magnet which held me to them and their work. Sometime, what they have taught us may be transmitted to earth. At present much of it could not be understood, and it would be rejected as unreal. In the meanwhile *we* are making use of these lessons for our guidance.

In time we gathered much of truth from above. Our noble teachers have never failed us, but many times they have responded to our soulful invocations and earnest invitations, conveying to our minds new powers and a higher understanding. Perhaps one secret of our success in holding intelligent and instructive communion with the celestials, lies in the fact that we never seek them with frivolous requests or idle motives. Neither do we ask their companionship for personal, selfish purposes. Our object always is to gain light, knowledge and wisdom from exalted spheres, the better to forward our efforts and our work for suffering humanity.

I feel that I cannot prepare myself too carefully for the approach of my spirit guides. The purest thought, the most prayerful aspiration of my heart, cannot be too elevated for such inspection. The daintiest garment I can wear, the choicest flower I can bring, the finest arrangement of external surroundings, are none too beautiful for their eyes; and so I seek to treat them as royal guests, who deserve the very best I can afford. What is true of my life is true of that of all mediums

in our world. I am not different in this respect from others, nor do I deserve more credit. I simply speak of myself as a type of all. We see and know the importance of providing pure conditions and pleasing associations for the wise and good of diviner worlds who approach our haunts, and we make the effort to fulfill the law.

From our celestial teachers we have received a sufficiency of material to fill many volumes of lore. Much of it concerns planetary life, and it has been compiled in such convenient form as to be now in use in some of our advanced colleges. Through the light thus revealed my father and others have been able to guide their pupils most successfully in their investigations of the wonders of the heavens.

In this way we learn of life. We are taught of the magnificent proportions of the universe. We gain a comprehension of that stupendous plan of existence that does not relegate a human soul to one little spot in space, and to one brief span of conscious existence, but which unfolds before it a divine destiny, offering to it line after line of advancement, grade after grade of development, world after world of exploration.

Yet by a matchless law, life proves that no soul can be really separated from its kindred. By "kindred" I mean those who are attracted to each other by the magnetic ties of love and sympathy. They may have been parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, or friends on earth; or they may never have known each other on the mortal stage. It matters not; for those who love deeply, who harmonize completely, are one in thought and aspiration; they can never be

separated; in soul life they mingle; and if by some duty, or other law, they are externally parted for a time, in spirit they will drift to each other. Experience will prove to such that the seeming separation was but a temporary condition, induced by a wise law for a grand disciplinary purpose.

Though our upward march leads us through one after another of the glowing worlds of space; though we may have to reap a long experience from planet to planet; yet we have eternity in which to accomplish results. The grand law of the universe holds us in control. We can never stray outside of its operations, and souls held together by the mystic band of love can never lose each other, nor become torn apart.

Step after step up the ladder of progress we find new fields of light for our inspection. At each round the vision grows clearer and the understanding more perfect. No fear, no trembling seizes the spirit lest its lessons should be misconceived, its search badly planned. We are not stinted for time, nor are we limited by adverse conditions. We may grow rapidly, if we so will. All human souls are thus favored. The desire, the will to learn, to rise, to unfold, bring sure results, and the soul determined to advance can never be held down.

Nor do we ever lack the encouraging assistance of those ahead of us. They are patient with our weakness, and their kindly sympathy supplies us with strength. There is no envy, no sense of rivalry in the spiritual sphere; but mutual helpfulness and affection abound.

Dear mortals dwell just outside these heavenly gates.

Some of them are even now in the border-land awaiting the summons to pass higher. Every aspiring heart that desires to live rightly is nearing the celestial kingdom; he need not fear that he will be kept down. Only the personal selfishness, and the morbid clinging of any life to carnal things, can pin it down. It rests with the soul itself when and how it shall rise to worlds of light.

As the matured mind is quickened beyond that of the child, so the understanding of the spirit is stimulated beyond that of the mortal, and is not slow to comprehend and apply the lessons of the new life; for all things are wisely provided in the providence of God for the highest unfoldment of humanity.

* * * * *

I have come with these pages of truth, trusting they may awaken thought in the minds of those who question of life in the spheres. Though I may in the future unroll other chapters of my spiritual experience before you, I at present feel I have given all that can be properly understood by those who read. I close, asking the loving Father to bless and guide the dear ones for whom this work is penned.

HERE AND BEYOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE HAND OF DEATH.

“GOOD-BYE, my sweet, good-bye! It will not be for long; in one week from the hour of my return I shall claim you as my wedded wife, and naught shall part us then, for whither I go you must go with me.”

The speaker, a tall and handsome young man of perhaps five and twenty, bent his head low over the face of the fair girl at his side and kissed the teardrops from her eyes. They were lovers, and this their last meeting previous to the young man's departure to the great metropolis — a distance of many miles, where he had business to transact that would engage his attention for several weeks. On his return they were to be quietly married, and the pretty cottage home that was to be their abode had already been daintily fitted up by the loving parents of the girl.

Smiling in her lover's face as these words we have quoted fell from his lips, the maiden replied, “Nothing shall part us then, dear George, but the hand of death.”

“Why speak of death, Mary mine? We are young and strong, and have many years before us. Our home is to be here on earth, and it will be heaven to me while you are there; we have no use for *death*.”

"Do not talk so, dear," gently remonstrated Mary. "Life and death are in His hands. His will is law."

"Yes, my love, I know; but we will not continue such a solemn thought at this our last moment. Come, cheer up, and let me see your happy smile wishing me all sorts of good luck and a speedy return to the sweetest of sweet girls."

In a few moments the lovers had parted, he to take the early morning train and she to turn to some pleasant task of preparation for the coming wedding-day.

George Phelps was a young man who had been reared under the holy teachings of the wise, good, sensible mother who had left him for the higher life a year before our story opens. His father had passed from earth when the boy was but six years old, and as he left no material wealth, George early learned the duty and pleasure of labor. By attention to his tasks, by faithfulness and unceasing energy, the youth had steadily risen in the esteem of his employers until, at the time our story opens, he held the position of confidential clerk in the largest manufacturing house in town; and it was in the interests of this firm that he was called away from home just at this time, as we have seen.

George Phelps and Arthur Hart had been school-mates and companions from boyhood up; they had held almost daily intercourse until the parents of Arthur — strict Baptists, and intelligent, well-to-do people — decided that their only son must be sent to college and fitted for the ministry. For years after this, the brightest spots in the boys' lives came when, free from study and toil, they spent the vacations of Arthur together and in their own way.

Mary Hart, a gentle, lovable girl, often joined the sports of her brother and his friend, and it was not strange that the association thus formed between the three should ripen into love and contemplated matrimony on the part of two of them.

At the time of which we write Arthur Hart had graduated from college, and was at home preparing to fill the pulpit of a little country church about five miles distant. He had ever been a delicate, gentle youth, — “more like a girl than a boy,” people said, “and just fit for a minister,” — whose heart seemed filled with sympathy for all God’s creation, and especially for such poor and forlorn human beings as are without a helper and a guide.

But some of the pious ones shook their heads and declared that he would never warn sinners to “flee from the wrath to come,” or succeed in “saving souls to Christ,” for when he found a poor unfortunate whose ways were erring, he would as likely as not forget to paint a terrible picture of the wrath of doom, in his solicitude for his comfort, and would instead give him a dime for bread, and only bid him to “try and do better for the future.”

Three weeks after the separation of George and Mary, during which time an active correspondence had been maintained between them, the news came to the absent man that a fever had broken out in the poorest quarter of the town, and that in ministering bodily and spiritual comfort to the lowly sufferers, Arthur Hart had taken the fatal disease, and was then prostrate upon a bed of pain.

Anxious and harassed, George waited for further tid-

ings, but days elapsed before he received a telegram announcing the decease of his life-long companion and friend, the gentle young student. The business upon which he had been sent was in such a condition as to demand his constant personal attention, and it was impossible for him to leave his post.

Other days of anxious waiting passed; the letters of his affianced had ceased; he wrote constantly, but received no response, and the only tidings he received from his native town were contained in the business notes of his employers.

Three more weeks elapsed, and finding the business in a satisfactory condition once more, George telegraphed his determination to return home at once. Three days later found him standing at the door of Mary's home; but even as he passed up the shady walk a thrill of fear seized his frame, and a dread foreboding took possession of his heart.

He was met at the door by Mr. Hart, in whose grief-bowed form and pallid face he could hardly recognize the strong man of a few weeks back, and conducted into the house.

"Where is she?" he asked; "is she ill?" framing into words the fear that had assailed him for days.

"She has been," answered the father in broken tones, "but she is at rest now. 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.'"

"Not that! not that!" wildly interrupted the young man. "You cannot mean that she is dead! My God! not *that!*"

"My poor boy, she is gone; she died with your name

upon her lips. We buried her two days ago in the church-yard by her brother's side."

The grief of the young man was terrible; he demanded to know why he had not been sent for, and was told that fearing he would take the fever if he came, she would not allow him to be called home, but that every word and look of her last hours proved to her watchers that her thoughts were of the absent lover who was so soon to have been her husband.

Our story concerns the future life of this young man, and so we will not dwell upon these days and their sad experiences. George Phelps seemed like a changed man after this, and it was not long before he left his native place to find a new life amid other scenes.

Possessing great energy and business capacity, he devoted his time to the accumulation of wealth, and the building up of a great commercial career. Far from the home of his youth he settled, and those who had known him in early life seldom heard his name mentioned, or knew anything of his doings.

Ever considerate for those about him, he was universally respected as one "whose word was as good as his bond," who was just in all things, and who exacted no service from others that was not fairly compensated for.

Yet, it was inevitable that one who should bend the superior abilities of a great energy to the accumulation of wealth; whose deepest thought was employed in the elucidation of business problems; whose association was with the world, and whose environment was one of material conditions, should develop a shrewdness of character and a *hardness* of intellect that leaned rather toward external than to spiritual things. The man was healthy

in his moral nature; he would wrong no fellow-man or woman. But he would and did question the evidences of creation, the assumptions of theology, and the claims of religion. While holding a sort of reverence for so-called sacred things, he had come to reject all testimony as to a future life, and to cease to question about it. Of this world he knew. Here he could plan, and engineer, and execute; here he could create wealth and command labor. By the force of his energy and inherent ability he could attract the attention and consideration of the influential of his class. All that was dear to him had been taken away in the persons of his mother, his friend Arthur, and his promised wife, Mary. He never married, never received the loving care of some sweet-voiced woman, and never gave loving attention in return. He formed no social ties, and made no beautiful home associations, and so he missed much of this life's blessings, and did not know that his spirit was the loser by what he had not gained.

Strictly just in his dealings, George Phelps expected and exacted from others the same kind of treatment toward himself as he meted out; and while he could be self-sacrificing and forbearing toward his fellows, such was his stern regard for truth and candor, and his abhorrence of hypocrisy and aught that favored deceit, that he was never known to forgive or condone an offense on the part of those he had trusted or associated with. Gentle and mild in many ways, there was yet a trait of harsh severity in his nature that had been acquired through the rough contact with that world which ever tends to harden rather than to spiritualize

the hearts of those who devote their time alone to the accumulation of worldly goods.

Once he had a friend and business associate whom he loved and trusted ; there was no favor that he would not grant this man, no praise that he could not heap upon his name. But in an evil hour the man, listening to the voice of temptation, sought to overreach his friend in an important business transaction, and the affair, coming to the notice of George Phelps, turned all his love to contempt and bitter dislike. From that moment he would not look upon the friend he had known, nor consent to hear his name mentioned in his presence. There was no doubt but the man had been sorely tempted ; circumstances were such as to extenuate his conduct to a degree. He offered to make full restitution, to serve Phelps on his knees, if he could only regain the confidence he had lost ; but all in vain ; he had forfeited his position of trust and never again could he be reinstated therein.

Once a young man, who honored and revered him as a most esteemed son should honor a father, came to George in a perturbed frame of mind to seek advice on a delicate subject. Charles Atwood, who had long been engaged to a beautiful woman, had at length overcome her reluctance to name the wedding-day, and the marriage ceremony had been performed amid the rejoicings and congratulations of numerous friends. For two months nothing had occurred to mar the happiness of the young couple, but one evening coming in unexpectedly upon his bride, Charles found her weeping over an open letter in her hand. Tender inquiries on the part of her husband only increased the

agitation of the lady, and gently taking the letter from her hand, Charles glanced over its contents.

The letter proved to be from an uncle of Mrs. Atwood, who lived in the West. It was filled with congratulations and kindly advice to the young woman, and although it contained allusions to some unhappy past, yet the reader could find nothing in its lines to explain the sorrow of his wife. But Clara had determined to unbosom a secret to her husband, and here was a fitting opportunity to do so. Love for him and fear that she should lose his affection had long restrained her tongue from making its declaration, but the pain of withholding from her companion what she had long felt he had a right to know was the cause of so much distress that she at length resolved to confess all and leave the result to him.

And so, sitting in the twilight, her head bowed and her voice filled with tears, she told him of her early affection for a man who proved himself unworthy of her; told him of her flight from her mother's home, of the marriage which afterward proved illegal, of her journey with her supposed husband to her uncle's home in Illinois, of her discovery while there of her true position; told him of the wrath of her uncle, and how by threats he compelled the base man to right her wrongs and make her a legal wife, and then, how this uncle took her away from her husband and procured a divorce for her in the courts of the State.

Charles Atwood listened to this revelation like one turned to stone. He could hardly credit his senses that the one he had so madly worshiped had once been another's, and that other's under such bitter cir-

cumstances ; and when the recital was over he rushed from the room and its inmate as if in despair.

Under the silent stars he walked, but their solemn light had no soothing influence for him, and it was not until he found himself upon the steps of George Phelps's home that he realized what he was doing and where he was.

In the quiet apartment of his elder friend he unburdened his mind, and questioned what he should do. And George Phelps, strong in his indignation at the injustice and wrong practiced against his friend, forgot to pity the poor heart-broken, suffering bride, and counseled the man who had sworn to protect her through good and ill, to see her no more.

"She has deceived you," he said. "She should have told her story ere the vows were spoken that made her your wife. By condoning her offense you do not know what trouble you may be storing up for yourself. She has shown weakness in concealing from you the truth. How do you know what she may not show in the future that will be full of bitterness to you?"

Oh ! hard, exacting, relentless nature, angels wept when you gave such counsel to a storm-tossed heart ; and a young life that was formed for loving service and noble deeds, was swept from earth by your mandate as surely as though you had led her captive to the victim's block and held her fair head thereon.

Charles Atwood, acting upon the advice of his more matured friend, resolved to leave his wife, and forget, if possible, his brief dream of peace. The poor woman could not brook the inquiries and condolences of puzzled friends, and left the city to go to her relatives

in the West. For a year she mourned and pined, but at length the morning dawned when her sad spirit found its release from earthly trial, and winged its way to other worlds, where it is to be hoped the judgment of God and the compassion of angels are not as those of earth.

We have dwelt upon this unforgiving, relentless side of that otherwise grand nature of George Phelps, for a purpose that will be revealed further on. In his discipline in life's school he had not learned the divine power of forgiveness, nor the elevating character of that true sympathy that can, while it condemns error, take the erring by the hand and assist him upward to reclaim his lost name and redeem his soul from the taint of sin.

In his sixtieth year George Phelps began an investigation of the claims of Spiritualism. He was first induced to do this by a friend, who was a Spiritualist, and who invited him to his house to attend a series of séances that were to be held there by a gifted medium from another city. Not expecting to learn anything of the future, George merely went to please his friend, and to divert his own mind from the now too pressing cares of business; but what was his astonishment to have the lady-medium turn to him, on the first evening of his appearance, and accurately describe his long-deceased mother, his friend Arthur, and his once affianced bride, Mary, giving their names, with an appropriate message from each, and assuring him that they were by his side, as they had been many times while he had thought of them as dead to all time and sense.

Mr. Phelps had many things to think of that night.

A new revelation had come to him, overturning all his ideas of life and futurity, and sweeping into his soul like a clean, sweet, fresh, invigorating breeze. He could not rest satisfied with what he had learned; it was so new and strange that he must see more of it; and so he continued to attend the circles, and to seek in private, until he became convinced of the truths of Spiritualism, and of the reality of his communion with the loved ones he had mourned as lost.

Thus he found many things to learn, for his returning friends had something more to do than merely to announce their presence. Lessons of life and its duties, our relations to our fellows, our duties and our responsibilities, were marked out for him to study. With his long-formed conception of things he could not grasp every truth that appeared; but he constantly gained some light, and as he found himself able to loosen his hold on the old opinions—ideas gathered from the world—he gained power to take up something new and precious to fill their place.

In her now frequent communings with him Mary Hart described her spiritual life, its pursuits, duties, and conditions. She told him of her love that had never grown dim, but had expanded and strengthened in the spirit life for him; and that although she had been taken from him here, and he had passed through life alone, yet she was waiting for him up above, where there is neither parting nor tears, and that a home of beauty should yet be theirs.

And then she drew a picture of that heavenly home, as sweet and pure in its simplicity as the little cottage home they had prepared and looked forward to in earlier

years; but as far beyond that in beauty of form and harmony of detail as things and associations of heaven can be beyond those of physical life.

Carried away by the picture, and longing for the love and sweet communion of his spirit bride, he longed to turn away from earthly scenes and be at rest with her. Bright anticipations of the joy in store for him filled his waking thoughts and wandered through his dreams. Life, that before had seemed cold and dark and uncheering to him, now assumed a pleasant aspect, for he had learned of its continuance, and of the blessing that it held in store.

“Do right,” she had said to him; “be just, and honorable, and pure-minded, and you shall dwell with angels in that home ‘not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’”

And so he was glad and thankful, and only waited the time when together — he and his beloved — they should find their heavenly home.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUMMONS.

DAYS passed into months, and months rolled into years, while the one absorbing thought of George Phelps's heart was to fit himself to dwell with the pure and good in their homes of celestial life. Prompted by the teachings of his unseen helpers, he sought to leave no duty neglected, and to slight no opportunity of befriending the unfortunate. Yet he had no sympathy with those who, through the stress of inherited or acquired evil tendencies, erred in their conduct and committed sin. He believed that it belonged to the law to take care of these, and never dreamed that he had any responsibility in the state of society that tolerated evil, or any duty to discharge toward the wrong-doer, except to see him incarcerated away from the light and air of heaven, and from the temptation to annoy peaceable, law-abiding people.

A few years after he had become convinced of the truths and the consolations of Spiritualism, George was suddenly summoned to test the realities of immortal life for himself. Without warning, the tie binding him to the body snapped in twain and set his spirit free. They found him in the morning cold and rigid, and pronounced it apoplexy that had killed him.

There was a grand funeral, attended by a large number of people, for many had known and respected the

quiet man who had gone from them. After the last ceremonies had been performed over the body the will was produced and read, and it was found that, although the deceased merchant left far less wealth than it was supposed he possessed, what he had had been carefully divided and distributed among the relatives and friends whom he had loved or who he felt had a claim upon him.

Let us now follow the departing spirit into the land of souls, and see what new life and lessons were to open before him. At the moment when the last great call came to George Phelps, he was awake and in his right mind. He had been thinking of the past, its achievements and its failures, its pleasures and its pains. His thoughts had wandered to his early life, and old friends whom he had once so loved seemed to appear before him. He recalled to his mind the image of his mother, and her gentle face seemed to beam upon the world-worn man with a smile of tender affection. He tried to remember how his father looked, and wondered if he should recognize him in heaven. And then he thought of his beautiful angel Mary, and of her delicate brother Arthur, the friend whom he had cherished; and as he mused a mist seemed to rise before his eyes, and a beating, roaring, surging tone filled his ears. It was as though a mighty flood had rushed over him; he could not breathe, he could not cry out; he was powerless to do aught but grasp the air with his hands, as one makes a frantic effort to seize something as he feels himself hurled through space. The sensation lasted but a few moments, though to the dying man it seemed like hours, and then a sweet, tranquil feeling stole over him, and a

sense of such perfect rest as he had never known pervaded every part of his being.

Still the mist hovered around him, and although his eyes were closed he could see and feel and sense its power. Suddenly the vapor appeared filled with lines of golden light, which grew until they illuminated the mist, that now looked like a cloud of glory, and in its midst he saw the faces he had been thinking of—his mother's, tender and radiant as an angel's, and beside her, one manly and noble and strong, which he felt must be his father's. Close to his vision floated that of his waiting bride, Mary — refined, delicate, heavenly in expression — and near her was one, smiling with joy and sympathy and welcome, the young and saintly student, Arthur Hart. Beyond these loving ones were other faces, bright and happy and sweet with greeting; but he only gazed on these so dear to his heart, so near to his life. And now he found himself not lying upon his bed, but erect, standing in the midst of the golden cloud and surrounded by the loved ones of the past. They saluted him in tender tones and with loving words of welcome; they gathered around him, and his soul seemed filled with divinest music as he listened to their sweet words of greeting and realized that he was safe at home.

As the full meaning of the new experience broke upon him, and he comprehended that he had parted with the body and was no longer a mortal, he cried in the ecstasy of his new-born joy: "And is *this* death — *this* which man so dreads and bows before? Oh! it is life, and hope, and all things glorious!"

Dear friends vied with each other in making the new-

comer feel comfortable and at peace. He had been taken at first to the pleasant spirit home of his parents, where amid congenial magnetisms and harmonious associations he began to form his first impressions of and gain his first acquaintance with immortal life. His beloved Mary and her brother were of the company, and seemed to be considered honored guests in this quiet, beautiful abode, where no trace of friction or of aught like turmoil appeared ever to intrude.

George felt perfectly at home with his dear mother, and in these first new days he loved to stretch himself beside her on the lawn and lay his head in her lap and question her of the wonders of existence, as many an inquiring boy, filled with a sense of awe at the wondrous opening before him on earth, goes to his maternal parent for a solution of his problems.

His father he admired and respected, but felt that he had yet to grow familiar with him, and so he studied this parent at every moment when he felt himself unobserved. Arthur seemed the same thoughtful and genial associate of times past, yet there were moments when George felt there was a difference between the long ago and now, and that Arthur Hart had grown immensely since then, until he seemed more saintly than human. Ah! our friend had yet to learn that the more intensely humane a soul becomes, the more saintly and holy it appears in form and character.

How gloriously sweet and refreshing were these early days in the spirit world! How divinely tender were his associations with his Mary! How he watched her as she moved to and fro intent upon some pleasant mission, or sat by his side giving him some account of life in the

spheres, and of what she had experienced in the years gone by. There were many things he could not comprehend, lessons that he had to study over and over again before they gained a hold on his mind. In his intercourse with spirits through earthly media he had been interrupted and restricted; sometimes days and weeks would elapse between one interview and another, and so while he retained what he did learn, yet owing to material cares and considerations he was limited in his instruction and communion with the angels. He felt this now as he realized how much he had to learn, but as far as he could comprehend he was glad to make use of the truths that appealed to him. There were times when a consciousness of his ignorance swept over him; moments when he realized the difference between a life pent up in the pursuit of external riches and one spent in love-service to others; hours when the radiance of his spirit companion Mary seemed to contrast with his own atmosphere until his appeared to him like a gloomy, misty environment. A feeling of dissatisfaction with himself would then seize upon him, and in the midst of harmonious, self-poised, happy beings, and surrounded by the most lovely views and beautiful objects of interest, he would almost despise himself, and the littleness, as he deemed it, of his spiritual nature.

But through the very experiences thus coming to him he was growing mentally and spiritually, and making his first efforts to adjust himself to the laws of his being.

He did not trouble himself with the disposal of his earthly body nor the distribution of his material effects; and it was not till he had been a spirit some months

that he was drawn back into contact with physical life. He had begun to feel an attraction in a certain direction; an impelling force seemed to be at work, moving him to proceed against his will. At length he unconsciously found himself obeying the power thus so strangely acting upon him, and very shortly he discovered that he was here in the midst of former scenes and associations. He saw and touched men of business whom he had daily met and known. He spoke to them, but they did not answer. Some of them he saw making foolish ventures in their business; he tried to warn and advise them, but they took no notice, and his efforts seemed wasted. Sometimes they would pause and think over the matter in hand and feel as though obligated to change their course, but once only was the mystic influence obeyed, and a large-hearted man of business saved from financial ruin; the others, worldly-minded, keen, and grasping, felt not the weight of the spirit's desire to help them, and they went on their way, speculating foolishly or making rash ventures and reaping no gain but experience as a result.

But yet the uncontrollable impulse was not satisfied, and George Phelps found himself moved to visit those who had inherited his money and possessed themselves of his effects. The relatives whom he had remembered in his will he had held little in common with; there were none nearer than cousins, and he had never held much intercourse with them; a few weeks at a time during the year, spent in their company, was all that he knew of them. At such times these people would pay great deference to him, for was he not a man of influence, of position and of wealth?

When it was discovered that the rich man was not so very wealthy after all, and that he had divided his means among so many that the portion of each was comparatively small, there was dissatisfaction and much private grumbling in this nest of relatives, who, because they happened to be connected with George by the accident of birth, considered that they held a claim upon him. One in particular, a loud-voiced man, did not hesitate to proclaim his chagrin and indignation that his legacy had not been greater. And it was to this condition of inharmony and discord and discontent that the returning spirit was unwillingly drawn by the positive magnetism of those dissatisfied ones whose complaining thoughts of him formed cords of steel to draw him to their side.

CHAPTER III.

HIS EXPERIENCES.

WHEN George Phelps discovered the atmosphere of discontent which the disposal of his wealth had created, his indignation knew no bounds. Oh! then he wished that he had studied the character and disposition of his connections before he had intrusted them with a share of his means. While the heat of the dissatisfaction lasted he felt bound there, and by no effort of his will could he free himself from contact with the ungrateful ones who knew nothing of his presence. His own state of anger had much to do with his condition, but this he did not know, and he resolved to do what he could to thwart the schemes of those who were loudest in their condemnation of him.

One or two who were weak-minded, and whose complainings were silent and querulous, he paid no attention to; but the loud-voiced cousin he attended with assiduous diligence. Finding this man disposed to invest the few thousands of his legacy in what promised to be a well-paying venture, he strongly impressed him to do so, and did not withdraw his influence till the plan was accomplished. In a little while the grasping man saw that he had made a mistake, but it was too late to withdraw, and he only had the mortification of seeing "Old Phelps's money" swept from him forever.

Another, a hard, exacting woman, whom George had seen turn a poor girl from her door, denying her the

food for which she sought and suffered, was influenced to place her portion of his bequest in an institution that claimed to pay a high interest, but an after investigation of the concern showed that the funds had been removed, its board of officers dissolved, and that neither principal nor interest remained for the clamorous creditors who besieged its doors.

When he had paid his respects in this fashion to those whom he disliked, George turned to others — not relatives, but those whom he had counted his friends — whom he had remembered in his will, and these he found under various conditions. One or two were not as grateful as might be desired: they did not know as he had done any more than he ought in remembering them. One or two more were pleased at what they had received, and had set themselves to enjoy it after the fashion of the world; another was grateful, and remembered to deck his picture with flowers, and to speak of him as “my late friend, Mr. Phelps.” And the last — a sensitive, sympathetic woman, who had been his friend and consoler in hours of weariness and pain, and to whom he always looked for assistance in any of his plans for benefiting others; one who he felt sure understood and never misjudged him — he found pursuing her own work in her quiet way, making no display with what he had bequeathed to her, but looking upon it as a sacred trust to be used in doing good; filled with earnest thoughts of life, anxious to be of use in the world, and thanking God for the friend she had known and honored, and that his heart was at last at peace with the angels whom he loved.

Coming from the glitter and dross, the baseness and

frivolity that he had encountered, into the presence of this pure woman who had known much of life's trials and cares, was like passing from the hot and murky atmosphere of a closed dungeon into the light and peace of heaven; and here George began to regain his human affection and gratitude and appreciation, and to feel that there are spiritual beings walking earth in garments of flesh.

In the presence of this friend his tired spirit grew strong, his fevered senses gained tranquillity, and he broke the chain binding him to earth and repaired to the quiet home of his mother, in the upper country. Here again he was joined by Mary, but Arthur was away upon some beneficent errand to humanity. George found that he had no need to recount his experiences, as his friends had been cognizant of them; and he discovered that the lessons he had learned in his pilgrimage had enlarged his perceptions and widened his understanding.

As the days passed in this quiet retreat, the spirit gained new light upon the subjects that occupied his mind, yet he was not at ease. As yet he had never visited that home which Mary had described to him in her communications through mediums when he was a mortal, and he longed to see the spot that was to be hers and his exclusively. Besides, he had never attended his love in her labors for others, nor in her beneficent errands to the lowly and unfortunate. He did not share her lessons, nor did he enter as much into her life as he had hoped to do. Yet he was with her, and shared her love, her sympathy; she was ever tender and confiding with him; there was naught of affection or

attention from her that he missed; it was as though she were a college graduate, and he a mere school-boy; though they might love each other dearly, he could not comprehend the tasks and studies that were so simple to her, for he had not yet grown up to them.

Once he said, "Mary, darling, why can you not teach me those laws and principles that are so clear to you? You seem loath to tell me when I am wrong, or to check my restless moods."

And she answered: "I cannot give you the things you seek, because they must be born within you through experience, and this you are acquiring as rapidly as you can appropriate it to your understanding. I do not check your eager restlessness for knowledge, because I know that it will be valuable to you by and by, in teaching you wisdom in applying truths to your life. I am loath to tell you when I think you wrong" — and here she spoke with hesitation — "because I fear you will take it ill from me."

"As though I ever could think hard of you for anything you might say, darling," he responded; "only try me, and see how grateful I will be for your admonition and advice."

With a smile she said, "Tell me, George, what was the motive that urged you to thwart the plans of your cousin, and influence him to invest the money you left him so that he should lose it all? And what power swayed you in impressing Harriet to put her portion into a bank that you knew would swallow it up?"

He seemed surprised at the question, but answered,

"Indignation that such base ingratitude should exist, was the cause of my motive, no doubt. I was vexed

that those ingrates should speak and think of me as they did, and I was determined they should not profit by the money I had toiled for."

"Then it was not because you found them unworthy your bequest in any way, but because of their ingratitude?"

"No; I did not think of them in any other light, though he is mean and sordid and avaricious, and she is arrogant and selfish and proud."

"Yes, and I am glad they did not retain the money you bestowed upon them, for they are undeserving people. But, dear George, could you not have influenced them to dispose of it in other ways, that it might have done some good? When one works in anger the result is never so potential for good as when one labors from some higher motive."

He seemed nettled at the words that appeared like a criticism of his conduct, and she said no more: but the thought sank into his heart, and he began to learn that in celestial life there is no place for anger, no room for passionate wrath, and that angels, in working a regenerating power through selfish, ignorant humanity, never make use of the weapons of retaliation, but, if they must censure or punish, do so in the spirit of love, and from the motive of uplifting and purifying those whom they condemn.

Shortly after this George desired to know when he should go with Mary to her home, and she said, "Are you not happy here in this sweet spot?"

"Yes, it is pleasant," was his reply, "and I enjoy its peaceful influence; but I do not yet feel at home with my father; he is so busy, and pays so much attention

to the concerns of the people around him, that I feel like a mere cipher in his presence. Then, Mary, I want to understand you better, and I think I can do that in our own home."

And so it was decided that they should leave the kindly parents and go to their own home. On the way they stopped at a pleasant house beside a running brook, and found that Mary's parents lived there. How changed they seemed from what they were on earth. The lines had faded from their faces. The stiffness had disappeared from their figures; there was a serene and gentle expression to their features unknown in years past. George could see at a glance that his old friends had grown, and with his present knowledge he knew they must have long since thrown off their old ideas of "the wrath of God" and "saving grace," and kindred themes.

They were delighted to welcome their daughter and her companion; but the twain did not tarry there long, and soon continued their journey. At length the travelers came to a clump of stately trees, beyond which stood a small but dainty dwelling, in the midst of fertile lands and blooming gardens. The structure was apparently one of snowy marble, the copings and columns of which were wrought and chiselled in the most exquisite manner. Standing amid the luxuriant growth of nature's most beautiful creations, it appeared like a brilliant gem in a fair and precious setting.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW HOME.

THE dwelling, shining before him in the mellow light, reminded George in its architecture of the pretty cottage that, many years before, he had prepared for the bride who never came to preside within its walls; even the brilliant rose-tree by the entrance, loaded with great, rich, creamy blossoms, recalled a similar but inferior bush that he had planted by that lowly cot with such happy anticipation of coming joy. But although the exterior of this new abode, and even the interior in its finishing and appointments, brought vividly to mind that earthly cottage, yet every line and detail, every cornice and curve, every adornment and fitting of *this* beautiful retreat so far transcended in luxury, in delicacy of beauty, in harmony of color, in symmetry of form, those of that other as to make the resemblance fade into a startling comparison.

It is impossible to describe in mortal language the details of a home in the spheres; the habitations of pure, exalted souls appear in harmony with the character of their inmates; every appointment is loveliness itself, and no external language can do them justice in an attempted description. Suffice it that *this* was the heavenly home of angel Mary—the abode that she had prepared with love's skillful materials for the darling of her heart. Here she had brought the rich treasures of intellect, of music and of song. Here she had collected

rare works of art, and here she had applied her wondrous powers of genius to create and beautify a home of joy for the one most dear to her.

To a casual observer it would seem as though this structure was complete, and that nothing more was needed to make it perfection itself; yet Mary knew that many finishing touches were yet to be added ere a harmonious whole should be presented.

"This is the home of which I told you, dear," she said, laying her hand upon her companion's arm, and pausing with him at its entrance to admire the charming view of hill and valley that swept out before them, and to inhale the odor of the scented blossoms at their feet. "Do you remember, in fitting up the home we expected to fill on earth, how we planned certain apartments for brother Arthur, and proposed that he should come there to dream and study and recreate just when and for as long as he pleased?"

"Indeed I do," said George, "and how cordially we meant it all."

"Yes; and now those plans may be consummated, for here are apartments furnished just to his liking, that he can enjoy by himself or with us, as he elects, for our home must be his stopping-place too."

Assenting with pleasure to this announcement, George Phelps passed into the dwelling with Mary to make a tour of inspection. Most of the apartments he found complete in their construction and furnishing; those assigned to the student Arthur seemed the abode of perfection. They were of marble whiteness, containing soft cushions and inviting seats; a dim, rose-hued light pervaded them, and a sweet, delicious influence of

peace filled the atmosphere. Like his own life, these apartments of Arthur Hart were suggestive of purity, serenity, and all things prayerful and sweet.

As he strolled from room to room of this delightful dwelling, George turned to his guide and said: "This is a charming abode indeed; but tell me what have I done toward its erection? I feel that you and Arthur have earned it by your own efforts, and that I have no right to enjoy it unless I, too, can put something into it."

"You have contributed much to the work, dear George. Every good deed that you have performed, every kindly word spoken and encouragement given to the struggling, unfortunate ones you have met has wrought some adornment, or fitted into some corner of this habitation. Do you see this beautiful archway, how delicate its tracings, how marvelous its workmanship? Do you notice how it is the entrance from one pretty room into another more lovely beyond? Yes; well, the material and the power of its construction you supplied many years ago. How? you ask. Recall to your mind a circumstance when you met a poor woman, faint, hungry and cold; she fell across your way as you were hurrying to send an important telegram. Your first impulse was to speed along and leave the stranger to other hands. But you did not; you paused, examined the prostrate form, and conveyed her to a neighboring shelter. You applied restoratives, and when the woman revived you learned her sad story of poverty, want and woe. You raised up kind friends for her, interested yourself in her behalf, and saved her from despair and death. The delay occasioned by this

affair made your telegram too late to be of use, and, in consequence, you suffered a heavy financial loss. You did not know, George, that the loss of that money through a noble deed was the means of procuring this enduring archway which so beautifully adorns our home; but it is true."

The fair speaker passed on with her surprised companion, and, pointing to a massive pillar that seemed in itself strong enough to support the entire building, continued, "Yonder column, smooth as ivory and white as alabaster, has been furnished this dwelling from the wealth of your soul. Once you made a great sacrifice for another; the man had but little claim upon you, but while you had—in the world's view—a perfect right to all he owned, yet you claimed nothing, but gave him all, showing him such friendliness and assistance that the prayers and blessings of his wife and children followed you always. At the potent moment, when the struggle with self was fought, and your true nature gained the ascendancy so as to yield up to this man these riches and at the same time consent to be misunderstood and ridiculed by your business associates, the blow was struck that wrought this noble column and gave it a place here in your spirit home."

And so she passed along, pointing out a picture here and an ornament there, as evidences of his work and his contribution to the home fund. But while he was delighted and astonished at what he saw and heard, George did not fail to observe bits of discolor on the otherwise perfect tinting of some work of art; places where the walls or furniture were not finished in harmony with the whole, as though the material had given

out in their construction; and she was obliged to explain that when this or that object was in process of construction, this or that work of art under execution, or that and the other bit of wall or ceiling or carving under workmanship, he had felt some hard thought of a human being, or spoken some word of anger, or done something that his best thoughts told him he should not do, or had refused or neglected to do something that he knew ought to be done, and just at that moment the flow of harmonious, associative magnetic sympathy between him and the workers in the celestial home had been suspended, and the labor in hand had to be laid down for want of power to continue it.

"For you see, dear," she said, "we all have to assist in building our own homes, and however much we may receive aid from loving friends, we have very much to do in supplying power and material for what we are to enjoy. This law holds good, whether we are incarnated in earthly flesh or not; but these unfinished places will all be completed some day. The blemishes will disappear, and you will make them all lovely to look upon."

Sweet and low, like the chiming of silver bells, were the words of the pure spirit, and as they rang through the soul of the man at her side they stirred within him a new conception of life, its conditions and its laws. He said nothing, but pondered over what he had learned, and in the silence of his heart he registered a vow to do all in his power to atone for whatever mistakes and failures he had made in the past. But as yet he did not understand himself, and he had still other experiences to undergo ere he could perfect the work he longed to do.

In this delightful home, surrounded by all that is lovely in nature and in art, associated with the gentle being whom his soul adored, the frequent companion of good Arthur and the other bright spirits, George Phelps settled down to the enjoyment of life. There were works of literature and of art, the masterpieces of great minds, to be studied and admired. In this spot every facility for the culture of his intellect and the expansion of his native powers seemed to be afforded him. Wise and advanced teachers and guides were at hand to explain and expound any knotty question or perplexing problem that arose in his research after knowledge, but he found the most satisfaction in the results of those truths that he most diligently sought and acquired for himself.

Under the new light and inspiration and happiness that had come to him, George began to grow sweeter and calmer and more refined in spirit, as the fruit, hardened by the coldness and storm, becomes mellowed and sweetened and fair under the genial sunshine and gentle shower. The little angularities that had sharpened an otherwise noble life seemed to be wearing away, and he really began to grow unconscious of their existence.

But occasionally a thrill of discontent flashed across the serenity of his life, a restless dissatisfaction, occasioned by the thought that with all the love and sympathy and devotion which Mary bestowed upon him, he could not and did not enter more fully into her life and its employments. Something seemed to jar upon him; a feeling of pressure, as though a weight were laid upon his heart to still its buoyancy. Not a

ripple of inharmony ever disturbed the peaceful happiness of that home. No one could look upon Mary, that lovely angel, so devoted to good works and lofty aims, and not be benefited and elevated by the sight; yet through all the conscious splendor and joy and blessing of his surroundings, the man knew that he did not come up to the altitude of those beings who were his companions and guides.

While engaged in the study of some grand theme, or busy learning the lessons that great scientists had to impart, his mind intent on the acquisition of mental power and knowledge, after the same positive manner that on earth had led him to bend his energies to the accumulation of worldly wealth, George was at first content to miss the presence of his love, and to ask no questions concerning the missionary work that demanded her attention. But after a time he came to feel a desire to know more of these things, and to ask her of her coming and going, and to wish to accompany her on her errands.

After much importunity on his part Mary consented to take him with her, warning him, however, that the sights and scenes he might witness would be unpleasant and annoying to him.

"If I consulted my æsthetic tastes," she said, "I would not do this work; but duty calls me, and pity fills my heart with such compassion for the suffering, passion-haunted souls I visit, that I must endeavor to uplift them."

"What you can endure, love," he answered, "I can surely bear: lead the way, and I will willingly follow."

CHAPTER V.

STRUGGLES WITH SELF.

To what a wild, barren spot these two spirits passed — out from the light and glory and peace of the higher state, into a place of gloom and shadow, so devoid of vegetation, of light and warmth, that George could not express his surprise at the change, but silently followed whither his companion led. Here was a scene of wild confusion. Men and women were wandering about hither and thither, by twos and threes, or alone; some were gathered in groups, gesticulating wildly, or vehemently quarreling among themselves. The faces of all were seamed and scarred, their dress was wild and disordered, there were no marks of cleanliness or tidiness about their persons, and the aura, or atmosphere arising from each one, was of a murky, stifling, and pungent character. It was plain that these people had lived sinful, sensual, ignorant, and degraded lives. They had been steeped in the waves of vice and passion until they had left an impress on their natures that was seen upon every lineament of their features and in every movement of their persons.

George could not repress a sign of disgust at the sight he thus beheld, and he made a movement as though to restrain his bride from going in contact with any of these creatures. She turned to him and said, "You have always been pitiful and generous and kind

to the poor and unfortunate; do you not wish to be helpful to those in need now?"

"I have always wished to befriend the *deserving* poor," he replied; "those worthy people who, through misfortune or sickness, have been reduced to poverty. But it was the well-meaning and pure-minded whose distress I sought to alleviate—not such abandoned wretches as these. They are fit only for the prison or house of refuge. I believed the law could best deal with them."

"But we have no such poor here as you speak of, my dear; those who were well-meaning and pure-minded on earth arise out of their condition of want and suffering when they enter spirit life, and they are among the best citizens and most contented members of the spheres. But these poor creatures, knowing nothing of love, of purity, of unselfish goodness, come over here from the by-ways and slums of earth, and such is their first condition in the spirit world. They are in need of teachers, helpers, guides, and friends."

"But they appear lawless, Mary dear, and is it not risky for such as you to go among them? Have you no system of restraint, no strong officers to take care of these persons?"

"You shall see our methods of discipline, our system of restraint and the working of our officers," she said with a smile. "But I can see that you shrink from this place, and are unwilling to stay or have me stay. Tell me, if we were on earth and a most contagious disease should break out in our midst, would you forbid me to go among the sick and suffering to minister to their comfort?"

He hesitated a moment, then slowly said, "I am afraid I would not consent to your doing so."

"And if a crowd of lawless people should break out in disturbance, and I should feel a call to go among them to teach them how to better their condition and to lift them up, what would you do then?"

"I should sternly forbid you to make the attempt." And this time there was no hesitation in his tones.

"For my own protection you might deem it wise to do so; but, in either case, would it not be better to speed me in the going with a blessing, knowing that God's work is ever best accomplished in the sacrifice of inclination and personal preference to His will?"

"I cannot tell; but I do not like this place nor its influence. Surely there are others who can labor here. Come, I do not want you to stay; let us go."

"Hush! there is no danger for me, and I am going to yonder group of women to help them find their womanly natures. Hear them shouting and jesting and singing in coarse, rude voices." And she pointed to a knot of females who appeared to be the grossest of that gross company.

"You will not do this thing, Mary! I implore you, come away."

"No, dear, this is my daily mission; here I find the work that enables me to enjoy heaven. They do not see us; they cannot behold persons or scenes different from themselves. Their surroundings are the externalization of their inner condition. See, there is Arthur; watch him as he moves along. I am safe where he can go."

A little distance before them George observed a

spirit, who, in the midst of the murky and squalid surroundings of the place, seemed enveloped in a radiant light which was impervious to the gloom. Looking closely he recognized his friend Arthur, who was now moving about, touching first one and then another of the miserable creatures around him, on the head or shoulders. A long line of magnetic light streamed from his hands upon those he touched. They started at the contact and a hush fell upon them, the rude jeer died on their lips, the ribald song ceased suddenly, they straightened up, and a change passed over their features, which grew thoughtful and quiet.

"Such is our method of restraint, our school of discipline, or officer of the law," said Mary, gently. "Human love and sympathy and magnetism are the potent powers that quell all disturbance in the soul of man. But Arthur awaits me; I must go to him."

"Mary, you will not; let him and others do the work; he is a man, and is better constituted for it; surely you can find some more congenial labor. Nay," as she made a forward movement, "I will not permit it; you *must not, shall not* go."

A heavenly smile passed over her features, as she said:—

"No greater love hath the heart of man than the will to uplift and bless the most lowly. Only the sick have need of a physician; these are my patients; they are in need of the nurse and the doctor; I must go to them. Human love when confined to personal interests and desires may grow selfish and impure; when flowing out in compassion and helpfulness it reaches its spiritual source. You forbid me to teach these poor creat-

ures; though I love you much, I must disregard your command; the soul recognizes no mandates but the law of conscience. The voice of duty calls me, and my brother is waiting; he depends upon me; I must go."

And she turned from him to the group of women we have seen. He watched her as she moved, rays of golden *aura* streaming out behind her, lighting up the dark places. The creatures she approached grew silent and wistful, as bending forward they seemed to catch the influence she showered upon them. Some appeared as if falling into slumber, others sank into reverie, and all succumbed to the magnetism of the radiant spirit who bent above them.

George saw that no harm could come to her, but that she was all potent to do good in this unlovely place. But his heart was hot and sore and restless. Contending emotions filled his being. He was slightly irritated and annoyed to find his will so calmly set aside by the woman he adored. Disgust at the prospect before him, indignation that such wretches should have a claim on his friends, dissatisfaction with himself at his own want of zeal, and a general discontent with life, each strove for the mastery, as he turned to retrace his way to his beautiful home and to his studies.

Once more in the midst of his pursuits, he sought to bend his attention to the study of a pleasant theme that had attracted his mind; but he could not quiet himself. He was restless and disturbed in mind, and nothing seemed to give him peace. The beautiful objects around him only served to increase his agitation, for here and there his gaze fell upon a bit of discolor, or an uncompleted article that as yet he had failed to retouch

and finish. He wandered out over the grounds belonging to the house, but the flowers and the birds failed to charm him as they had been wont to do. He flung himself down beneath a tree and gave vent to the conflicting emotions that filled his soul.

Gradually he began to question himself; to try and understand the meaning of his new unhappiness. Was anything the matter with his surroundings? No; they were all that the taste of man could devise or desire. His friends were thoughtful and kind and helpful. With Mary he could find no fault, save that she did insist on helping those who were of all creatures the most in need of enlightenment; but was not her mission and that of her brother Christlike and divine, and could they be deterred from it because of *his* lack of sympathy and interest in it? No, they could not and they ought not. He settled that. What, then, was the cause of his trouble? And reflection brought the answer—it was *himself*; yes, in his own lack of harmony. He was out of tune, and jangled fearfully. There must be a readjustment of the forces and principles of his nature if he would be contented. Well, he would try to think more kindly of the mission and work of Mary, and to give her a word of encouragement and approbation when she returned.

Thus did he fight out his first great battle with self. It was a struggle, but the man who had been used all his life to great battles with the conditions of existence was strong enough to bear the conflict and win the victory.

After this there was peace in his soul, and he seemed to understand Mary and Arthur better than he had

done before. Although he did not again offer to go with them on their mission, yet he often spoke of it with interest, evincing a desire to know of their success, and expressing his approval of their efforts to enlighten the ignorant and purify the degraded.

He still pursued his studies, still attended lectures and concerts and held discourse with wise and lofty spirits. His mental powers grew and his perceptions increased; yet he felt that he had not gained the height of happiness he knew belonged to others. In his garden stood a little pavilion; it was but a carved roof supported by four graven pillars. In the centre of this pavilion stood a massive square block of stone—nothing more, nothing less; over the entrance of the building was the inscription, "To err is human; to forgive, divine," in letters of gold. The meaning or purpose of this pavilion he had never learned, but it had sorely puzzled him. It appeared as though something grand had been projected here, but that its object had been abandoned at the last moment.

George was often drawn to this spot, and on one occasion, as he stood looking at the pedestal, he suddenly discovered a picture suspended over it. In a moment it had vanished, but not before he had recognized the face as that of the friend he had long ago loved and trusted, but who had sought to overreach him, as we have seen in a former chapter, and toward whom he had ever after cherished a strong and bitter dislike. Instantly the conviction rushed over him that in some way the unfinished work of this spot was connected with his disagreement with that former friend. "To err is human; to forgive, divine." "Yes," he cried, "but I am not divine, and I can never forgive him."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONQUEST.

WITH the momentary glance at that portrait that had so mysteriously appeared and vanished, old memories revived in the heart of George Phelps. Again he saw the friend he had known and trusted; again he lived over the scenes of the far-off past, when his confidant had sought to overreach him in such a way, that had the plan succeeded, he would have been involved in great financial disaster. Again he experienced the shock that the discovery of his friend's baseness brought to him. Once more the thrill of indignation and bitterness of spirit which had seized him assailed his soul, and he cried: "I can never forget it—I never want to look upon his face!" Yet he knew that the man had repented, that he had sought to atone for the moment of weakness that caused him to yield to temptation. "Of what avail his repentance? Would he have repented if he had succeeded in his nefarious schemes?" he thought. "No! he sought to wrong me; he failed, and then he wished to regain my friendship. I want naught to do with him."

"To err is human; to forgive, divine." How these words kept repeating themselves to his soul. He left the spot, but still they haunted him; he was restless, miserable; recollections of the quiet days when he and his old friend were happy in each other's confidence occurred to him. If he could wipe out the shame and dishonor of his old associate he would do it; but the

remembrance that he had been wronged by him could not be destroyed.

A desire to revisit earthly scenes came to him, and he sought to obey the impulse. As before, he followed the attraction urging him on, and soon he found himself in the upper chamber of an earthly dwelling. Upon a bed lay the form of a man, aged and pale and worn; around him were many spirits, but at his side was but one mortal, evidently a clergyman, who was in the act of administering spiritual consolation to the dying man. The watchers had been dismissed from the room, and the sick man lay with his eyes fastened upon the speaker as he listened to the words falling from his lips.

"Oh! I do not fear death," he murmured; "I have only one prayer to make. Once I had a friend whom I loved; he trusted me, and such was his confidence that he placed it in my power to ruin him, and I—I—God forgive me! nearly succeeded in doing so. I repented; God knows how I repented; I would have atoned for my misdeed; I prayed for pardon, but he would not listen, and bade me depart from his presence. Since then I have tried to do right. I have wronged no one, man or woman. If I could hear the voice of my friend, granting me his forgiveness, I could die in peace. But he is dead, and I shall never see him more."

At the sight of that pallid face, the sound of that weak and tremulous voice, and more than all, the appearance of the spirit struggling to free itself from its tenement of clay, and right itself in the estimation of its friend, George felt a wave of love, of sympathy, surging through his being. The old resentment he had cherished so long melted away in the light of revived

affection, and the animosity of the past gave place to pity in his breast. Flinging himself by the couch, he cried, "John, I do forgive you! let the past go! we may be friends and brothers yet."

The dying man heard the words, "John, I do forgive you," and with a feeble cry he stretched out his hands as if to grasp some one unseen. The family were called, but the spirit did not return to bid them adieu; it had fluttered out of its fleshly casket, and the two long-estranged friends folded each other in a pure, spiritual embrace of fraternal love.

Thus was the work of forgiveness wrought at last; and thus did George learn the power of spiritual love that endureth all things, hopeth all things, forgiveth all things, and in itself is divine and holy. Many times in the future would these two reunited friends meet, and labor together, growing in grace of spirit like the very angels of God.

But now there was other work, and resigning the new-born spirit to the friends waiting to give him welcome, George turned away to still follow the inward prompting that seemed to urge him forward. A new sense of peace had entered his soul, unlike anything he had known before, so sweet, so tranquilizing and restful in its influence, that now he knew the blessed power of forgiveness and of mercy.

Pressing onward he came in contact with many people — mortals struggling for the accomplishment of some end. Guided by the light within him, he saw that they were weak and ignorant and sometimes selfish. Many of them were esteemed by the world for their wealth and station, but to him they appeared

spiritually impoverished. Yet he did not condemn and scorn them as he would have done in times past. He saw that the greediness, the selfishness and pride, were born of ignorance, and that if they were taught the true meaning and purpose of life, and could be made to understand them, new motives would influence them, and they would reform their habits and methods of living. For in every heart he could discern some signs of goodness; in each breast were germs of tenderness, or love, or thoughtfulness, that could be nurtured into life and activity. Thus, instead of harshly frowning upon them and seeking to overthrow their plans, he sought to exercise an improving influence over them; to direct their minds into higher channels of thought; to attract their attention to worthier ends and aims than they had known, and to guide them in such ways as to have external objects of pity or benevolence brought to their notice; and thus by appealing to their sympathies, awaken within them aspirations for lives of greater usefulness.

In more than one instance he succeeded in this work, and each success he met and each effort he made increased his power and ardor in beneficent labor.

Once more the spirit felt a powerful influence impelling him to move in a certain direction, following which he discovered himself in a private business office, wherein were seated two men. One, an elderly gentleman, with benign countenance and gentle, blue eyes, was unknown to him. The other, a man of middle age, whose face was marked with lines of care, and whose heavy brown hair was thickly seamed with gray, he recognized as Charles Atwood, once the young man

he had counseled in many ways, and who, in following his advice in one instance, had cast off the woman he had sworn to love and cherish.

Evidently the two men were in a confidential mood; the younger had been giving a recital of his early life, and had confided to the elder the story of his brief wedded happiness and its rude and abrupt termination. "Guided by the friend whom I loved and trusted as a father," he was saying as George approached him, "I cast her off, and would not look upon her face again. In a year she died, killed by my cruel treatment. In heart she was pure and good, more sinned against than sinning. I can see that now; but then I was stunned and pained, and I relied wholly upon his advice. He meant well, but he was not as wise as I thought him. He reasoned after the ways of the world. He did not know what it was to love, to sin, and to repent; he did not realize that for me to follow his advice would render one heart hopeless, and blast the happiness of another.

"Had I been wiser than I was, I should have known that no one could judge for another, and that every heart is doing right when it follows its own pure pleadings. I have mourned, mourned more than I can tell, for the past; its sorrow has aged me before my time. Could I have seen her, to beg her forgiveness, to tell her how I loved and had faith in her even while I cast her from me, I might have been spared much pain: but she died, and the opportunity that possibly might have been mine to do so was lost forever." And with a gesture of despair the man laid his head upon his arm, and gave himself up to the bitterness of his thoughts.

Transfixed to the spot, George, the spirit, listened to the words that caused him to realize, as he had never done before, the mistake he had made in advising his friend as he had many years previous. At sight of the anguish of the friend he loved, a spasm of pain shot through his own heart, born of an agonizing regret for his share in producing it.

"But this is weakness," Atwood continued, lifting his head to his companion; "I am not a child to spend my time in useless repinings. If it were possible, as you say, Mr. Harris, for the dead to come back and talk, surely my prayers and tears of remorse would have drawn her to my side, and I should have had at least one token of her presence."

"It is possible, my friend, as I have often told you," replied the elder man, gravely. "Come to my home to-night and I will give you evidence of the fact. You know and respect my daughter. I had thought you cherished a warmer affection for her; but what you have told me to-night leads me to think there is no room in your heart for love of woman. Annie is herself highly endowed with medial powers. Her communings with the angels are pure and sweet and highly instructive. You could not suspect my child of conscious imposture of any kind; but, were one to do so, the evidences of an external intelligence as the source of her occult powers are of such a character as to preclude all possibility of fraud on her part. Annie has a friend visiting with her who is also a fine medium, and to-night we will hold a private séance if you will join us."

"Your words almost persuade me. I think I will

come. I am not prejudiced on the subject, and am willing to investigate. But one word in connection with your remarks of my regard for your daughter, sir. It is true I do esteem her very highly; I consider her a most sensible and cultivated woman, and sometimes I have felt I could truly love her. But I stifle such thoughts, for I feel that to do so would engender a feeling of happiness that it is not for me to possess."

"Well, well, friend, we will not think of this at present. I shall look for you at eight to-night. Be prompt, as the spirits admire punctuality." And thus the two men parted.

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOME.

FILLED with dismay and sorrow and remorse at the ruin he had wrought in the heart of one he loved, George Phelps lingered by the side of his former friend until the shades of evening gathered, when he longed to make restitution — to do something to appease the sorrow of the suffering man; but he saw nothing that could be done.

Promptly at the hour appointed Charles Atwood appeared at the home of Mr. Harris, and with him, though unseen, came the spirit who had attended him through the day. Greeting Miss Annie with a courteous bow, and acknowledging the introduction to her friend, Mrs. Shaw, in the same manner, Charles seated himself and calmly awaited results.

It is not our purpose to give in detail the events of the evening; and we accordingly pass to that portion of it that mostly concerns our friends. Presently Mr. Atwood was aroused from his musings by a voice calling his name, and looking up, he discovered Miss Annie, with closed eyes and outstretched hands, leaning toward him. As he took her hands in his, she began to speak, claiming to be his old friend, George Phelps, and gave him an account of their early friendship, narrating events in his life that it was impossible for any one in that room save himself to know. Finally the spirit, through the entranced girl, referred to the heart

history of his listener, and to his transaction in it, imploring, in agonized tones, for forgiveness. It was impossible to mistake or to misunderstand, and with streaming eyes Charles Atwood assured the unhappy spirit that he freely pardoned the mistake he mentioned. At that instant attention was attracted to Mrs. Shaw, whose countenance had become illuminated with an unearthly light, and who began to speak in low, musical tones, not at all like her own in her normal condition. "I am Clara Atwood," she said, "and I come to tell my dear Charles how I love and bless him. I have nothing to forgive; the unhappiness of the past is vanquished by the joys of the present."

Much more was said, convincing Charles that his Clara lived and watched over him; that she was waiting him in the spirit world, where they would be reunited in heart and spirit, and that, as a well-wisher and earnest worker for humanity, she was doing her part to make the world better and brighter in charity and love.

When the spirit ceased, George Phelps, who beheld her — not as others did, through the medium, but apart, a radiant, beautiful spirit — still entrancing the medium as he was, fell upon his knees at her feet and implored her to grant him pardon for the wrong he had done. A heavenly smile illuminated the medium's face, as in angelic tones this bright being granted the forgiveness the repentant spirit sought.

It was an affecting scene, and one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. From that night Charles Atwood was a happier and a nobler man. Convinced that the death of the body does not end all of life and

hope and love for man, and that joys blasted here may be renewed there, he set himself earnestly at work to learn more of this new philosophy of life.

The lessons came to him as rapidly as he could comprehend them; the light in his eyes deepened; he carried himself more erect and stepped more buoyantly than he had for many a year. People said it was because Annie Harris encouraged his attentions—for they knew not of the weight that had been lifted from his life. It was true that he did now pay court to Miss Annie, and that she did not discourage him. After a while it became known that they were to be united; not that he had forgotten Clara or loved her less. He well knew she was his, and awaited him in that world where, after the manner of the flesh, “there is no marrying or giving in marriage,” and where, among the happy and blessed, jealousy holds no place. He knew that in forming new ties he would gain in grace of heart and tenderness of spirit the unfoldment he needed, and in bestowing care and love and sympathy upon another he would only sweeten and deepen the well-springs of his own spiritual nature. And Annie knew that, in giving him her affection and companionship, she would brighten the powers of her own being, and make a home on earth for the angels who wish such congenial places when they coöperate with men for the good of all.

On relinquishing his control of the medium, George Phelps felt more truly softened, humbled, sanctified and holy than he had ever been before. He had passed through strange experiences, had been called upon to grant forgiveness, and now had been made to crave

pardon for himself. He felt like another being; all the place seemed like holy ground to him; life possessed deeper significance than ever, and he felt as though the harmony of the spheres was surging around him.

Looking up, he saw Mary standing by his side. With a brilliant smile she stretched forth her hand and said: "Darling, you have done well; you have been born again of the spirit. I have waited long for this. Let us go home."

Humbly he answered: "I do not feel worthy to enter that heavenly home. For a long time I felt that I was doing nothing toward its support. I may have helped to plan and construct it, but I feel as one must, who, after building a mansion, finds himself unable to maintain it in accordance with its style. Why, I could not even find material to repair its discolored spots or finish its uncompleted appointments."

"Come and see," she urged; and almost reluctantly he obeyed.

But what a change had taken place in the spirit home. Surely the flowers did not bloom more sweetly, nor the sun shine more brightly; the dwelling stood as before, and its adornments were the same; yet if they were beautiful in the past, to George they were transcendently so now; and as he continued to gaze upon them, new points of loveliness attracted his attention. The discolored spots had all vanished, not a blemish remained to mar the effect of the whole. The unfinished articles and places were completed, and the home seemed perfect in its construction and appointments.

Down to the pavilion he strayed, and pausing at its entrance gazed with astonished eyes upon the figure

before him; for upon the hitherto bare pedestal stood a beautiful statue of most exquisite workmanship and design, representing a celestial messenger, with down-cast eyes and folded hands. The white drapery fell about the marble form in lines of grace and beauty. The expression of peace, of purity and of love upon its countenance cannot be described. The entire figure seemed instinct with life, and hope and joy, and it needed no words to tell the enraptured beholder that it was the embodiment of a spiritual conception of Forgiveness and Mercy.

Again was the spirit life of our friend George renewed; in the companionship of Mary and Arthur, in the study of life's great themes, and in association with the exalted souls of teachers and philanthropists, his mind grew strong, and his spirit became free.

His beloved and her brother still attended the wild, turbulent spirits who needed their ministrations, and one day he sought them in their mission, and appeared prepared to join their holy work. No longer the sight of the passion-tossed souls disgusted him; but a great compassion for their ignorance filled his being. He worked steadily and earnestly for their redemption; and as he possessed great energy of purpose, and always undertook with a will what he had to do, and as he felt the Angel of Love stirring his soul to new endeavor, he wrought grand works for the enlightenment and elevation of those degraded and miserable beings.

Now truly was he in harmony with his surroundings. Now a perfect sense of peace, of happiness and of bliss, pervaded his soul. Now he entered into the life-work of Arthur, and understood him as soul knows soul.

Said he to his friend on one occasion, "I know that substantially everything in this perfect home was as fair and delightful when I first came as it is now, but to me it seems so far in advance of what it was then, that I am overwhelmed with joy. True, it has been finished in spots, but that can hardly account for my changed conception of it."

"No, brother," responded Arthur, looking lovingly into the eyes of his friend, "the change is mostly in yourself. You have adjusted yourself to the conditions around you; have grown into harmonious relations with the laws of your being. Now, you understand Mary fully. You are in sympathy and coöperation with her work and mine; you feel that you are contributing to the support of our home; you are doing your part in the great workshop of life. This accounts for the change. In short, you have found that the Kingdom of Heaven is within."

And it was true. George Phelps had found himself, apart from all preconceived opinions, all acquired habits of life and methods of thought; he had grown up in spirit to reach the lives of those dear to him, and in doing this had found the perfect happiness for which he sought. When with Mary, there was no longer any restless feeling, any sense of restraint; their spheres blended in perfect harmony. The magnetism of both assimilated beautifully, and there was no undercurrent of disturbance. There was nothing one-sided about this union now; one was not higher and better and purer than the other, but both were equal, and each corresponded to the other so naturally that the fellowship was complete.

Merely to be in the presence of his love was bliss to George. A sense of rest and satisfaction pervaded his soul at the thought of her being near; while working and planning with her was heaven indeed.

Thus did the full understanding of the spiritual needs of man come to our friend; and leaving him with his companion and guides we bid him Godspeed in his efforts to bless mankind.

SLIPPERY PLACES.

CHAPTER I.

WAS IT LIFE, OR DEATH?

I HAD been ill — oh! so very ill with what the doctors had declared to be pneumonia. There had been a burning pain in my chest, with a horrible choking sensation; for days I could not breathe, I could not lie comfortably, I was filled with distress and pain. Everybody in the house had been, oh! so anxious. I knew of their breathless fear, their noiseless steps and their subdued whispers. All was hushed and still — no one must disturb “the little mother,” who was so ill. The poor, loving, grateful girls under my charge, who adored me almost as something not of earth, vied with each other in trying to do something to show their sympathy through my illness, and though I could not speak for the pain and suffocation, I appreciated it all.

Now a change had come over me. I had settled back more easily among the pillows than I had done before; the stifled feeling seemed rather to be forgotten than removed. The physician entered and fingered my pulse — then poured something from a spoon between my lips. The drops trickled down with a cooling touch that soothed the burning smart. I did not move, though I

heard the doctor say to the attendant — “To-night the crisis will come — do not leave her for a moment — send for me at once if you observe a change, but do not disturb her if she sleeps.” Gradually all sense of outward things died away. I did not seem to be asleep, yet I had no recognition of what was taking place around me. I nestled amid the pillows, they seemed so soft and warm. But what made them so fragrant, I wondered. Had some of the girls sprinkled them with perfume? As I lay, the soft, dreamy feeling creeping upon me, it seemed as if the pillows were made up of roses — rich, creamy, beautiful roses — such as I had not seen since I was a child, when my mother grew them in her little garden. Where did they come from? and how delicious they were! But, there! I was too tired to think or wonder, and I sank down amid the roses in blissful content.

Suddenly I found myself in another place; how I came there I knew not. I was no longer resting upon my own bed, embowered in the beauty of those mysterious roses; but I stood erect, clad in a soft, white, fleecy gown, my hair loosened, and falling over my shoulders. I noticed, in a vague way, that its brown locks glistened as with gold, and I missed the white threads that even at the age of twenty-eight had shone among the darker folds.

I found myself in a room large and square, and with lofty ceiling; cases of books lined the walls, save where here and there a heavily-framed engraving hung; tables and chairs were scattered about. The floor was polished and uncarpeted, save for a handsome rug in the centre. The place had a strangely familiar look to me.

Surely I had been there before, but this room was not a part of that modest dwelling which I had called home for years, and in the upper chamber of which I had been so ill. As my vision strengthened, memory seemed to assert itself. I recognized my surroundings. The room, the furniture, all were so familiar to me they brought a sense of pain to my heart. How had I come here, and why?

I was standing in the library of that house in Concord which had once claimed me as its mistress, and from which I had fled six years before. In bewilderment I gazed, and as I did so I observed the figure of a man half buried in the depths of an arm-chair. At the moment he groaned, and raised his head, and as he did so I recognized the face and form of Joel Howard, my husband.

I bent forward, and listened to the words he uttered; they did not seem to be spoken by his lips, and I could see they were *thoughts* rather than speech, though I heard them plainly. "Will this torture never cease? Must I live for years in this affliction? Oh! Dorris! Dorris! what have you done? It was for your sake I toiled and planned—to add to your comfort, to make you a rich woman. Ah! you misunderstood me, little wife—you thought me cold and heartless. I saw it all when I read your words, 'I have left your house forever. You do not need me, and I can get along without your love. In the joys that remain to you you will not miss Dorris.' Oh! how those words have burned into my brain. Dorris! Dorris! I do need you. I want you every hour."

At that cry I flung myself forward. I had not been

standing upon the floor, but seemed to be suspended in mid-air. Now I touched his head, I fell at his feet, my white garments trailing across them white and shimmering. He started, and I thought he recognized me; but no, he fell back in his chair, murmuring, "How strangely I feel, as if Dorris was coming back to me."

"I have come," I cried. "See, I am here at your feet, little Dorris, your wife; I have come home again;" but he made no response, and did not seem to hear me.

Just then the door opened, and a servant entered. "Mr. and Mrs. James Eastham are asking for you, sir," he said.

"Show them up at once," was the reply, and the man withdrew. I hastily arose and glided to a darkening corner of the room. James Eastham I remembered as the confidential clerk of my husband's office; but I did not know his wife; he was unmarried when I left home, but much may happen in six years. Again the door opened, and a couple entered. James Eastham I recognized at once, but who was that woman whom he brought as his wife? Surely that vivacious air, those purple black eyes, that jetty hair, that quick, springing step could belong to none but Sibyl Barton.

The pair advanced into the room, but I remained in the shadow. As my husband arose to greet them, something in his groping manner and hesitating step forced the truth upon me. He was *blind*. The knowledge came to me with a great shock, and for a moment I could neither see nor hear nor *feel*. I was benumbed. This, then, was why he did not see me; this was why he could not realize that his wife had returned.

When I collected my senses, they were talking about

something I did not at first understand, and not till Sibyl said, "And you have never found a clue?" did I realize their conversation was of me.

"No, no! the whole detective force seemed to be very stupid, and I have long since given up the search. Were it not for this unfortunate affliction I would prosecute it myself; but what can a blind man do?"

Have you any idea what took her away? asked James Eastham: "I really did think at first that she fled with Mr. Marks; but when he was seen around Boston the following week, and it was known that he was in close pursuit of his business affairs, of course I knew he could have nothing to do with Mrs. Howard's disappearance."

"No, I never suspected him. My wife was too pure and good to fly with any man. The truth is, the poor child was left too much to herself. She was sensitive and imaginative, and I think fancied I had grown cold toward her and did not love her."

"I have always regretted that I did not take her more fully into my confidence," remarked Sibyl sadly. "I think she sometimes thought I was too friendly with her husband. But you were the only one, Mr. Howard, who knew of my engagement with your clerk. I did not dare tell papa just then, lest he should be vexed. You encouraged our plans, and acted as a friendly messenger between James and myself when we could not meet. I think *now* that we should have told your wife, instead of whispering and laughing together as though we were on the high road to a grand flirtation. I really meant to confide in her, but several times when I approached her for that purpose she pleaded headache or

nervousness, and asked me to excuse her from listening to my stories of conquest. Yet she was always gentle and kind to me, and I admired her very much."

"Ah! yes, it was all a mistake — a sad mistake; but it is too late — too late for us to rectify the past," sighed the blind man in a low tone.

"How dreadfully ill the affair made you, Mr. Howard," went on the soft voice of the lady, "and for a long time we despaired of your life. Then when the doctors said you would live, but that through the shock to your nervous system, together with the over-taxation of mind and body you had experienced by undue attention to business, you would be sightless, your friends felt as if the trial was *too* severe. But it brought *me* happiness," and the speaker glanced at her husband with a smile. "Owing to your misfortune and illness Mr. Eastham was obliged to take entire charge of your affairs, and he accredited himself with such skill and judgment as to win the approval of my father, and from this we secured his consent to our union."

What revelations were coming to me! How I had misunderstood these people! Would I not have given worlds to recall the past and its mistakes? Scarcely knowing what I did in my anguish of mind, I glided forward and stood directly in the path of the three, gazing down upon them. They never noticed me, but went on with their conversation. I stretched out my hand and touched Sibyl upon the sleeve; she paid no attention. I turned to her husband and bowed; he seemed not to see me. What *did* it mean? Were they, too, blind? But no, I must be in a dream, and presently I should awake in the little house at Phila-

delphia where for nearly four years I had lived as the matron and "little mother" to my refugees.

I turned in sadness, and as I did so the scene faded from my view—no library, no husband, no former friends were before me. The walls had vanished, and I saw only a great open plain over which rolled clouds of mist, colored red and blue and purple, as if lighted by the rays of a rising sun. Out from the mist came a face that grew upon my vision—grew and grew and grew as I gazed with a famished look upon its features. It was sweet and tender and loving, younger than when I had last seen it, and not seamed with lines of care and illness, but it was *hers*, *HERS*, *my mother's face!*

As I recognized it with a smile of joy and a great heart-throb of greeting, something seemed to pull at me. I felt the sudden strain and fell forward. As I arose and opened my eyes a new scene met my gaze. I was standing in my own chamber by the side of the bed, upon which lay stretched a form and face singularly like mine, but oh! so cold and stiff. The eyes were closed and the hands clasped as in prayer. Around the bed were several forms weeping, and I noticed that a solemn hush had fallen about the place.

Presently an elderly lady in Quaker cap entered, and approaching the figure upon the bed laid her hand upon its marble brow.

"The dear child," she said, "she is at rest. Thee tells me"—turning to one of the girls—"that she passed away in her sleep."

"Yes, Mrs. Showers, we did not know when she died, but the doctor says she must have been gone two hours at least, before we discovered it."

CHAPTER II.

DORRIS.

MY parents called me Dorris Baker. They were plain New England people. My father was a clear-cut scion from an old Puritan family — uncompromising, and rather stern by nature, filled with an abhorrence of guile, and severe in his denunciations of all that savored of levity or carelessness. From him my childhood gained but little sunshine, and yet in his way he was kind to me. My mother was of gentle mold, timid, retiring and tender-hearted. In her child, her books and her flowers, she found a heaven of enjoyment; and as for me, I fixed my happiness in her presence. The wrongs of the unfortunate filled the gentle breast of my mother with compassion, and even the sinner found pity rather than condemnation at her hands. Even now I remember the prayer she taught me when a child at her knee, "Oh! Lord, be merciful to the erring. Chastise them only for their own salvation. Remember their needs, and bring them, in thine own good time, unto thy kingdom of righteousness and peace." A prayer that ever held with me through life, and kept alive in my soul a compassionate desire to help the wrong-doer to rise from his condition of sin to one of goodness, and which also gave *me* strength in many an hour of darkness to rise above temptation.

In the quiet precincts of our village home I passed my girlish days. Such educational advantages as the

place afforded were mine, but supplemented to these were the instructions I received from my dear mother. With a delicate physique, she was unable to attend to the exigencies of out-door life, and much of her time was passed in our little sitting-room, with book in hand, culling from the standard authors that she loved such choice gems of poesy or prose as not only served to enrich her own mind, but also to cultivate the intellectual tastes of her growing child.

When I reached the age of fifteen my gentle mother died. Every young girl, reticent and sensitive by nature, with budding aspirations and kindling thoughts, who has all her life been wrapped up in a tender mother's care, relying upon that dear parent in all things, and who has seen that precious life slipping away from her, will understand what a calamity fell upon me, and none other can realize the anguish that filled my being.

For a time I was dazed. I moved about the house automatically, attending to the duties that beset me, but taking no interest in anything. My father seemed more stiff and unyielding than ever before. He must have missed the lovely spirit who for twenty years had ministered to his comfort and smiled upon his coming, but he gave no sign; and so we fell into the habit of excluding ourselves from each other, instead of drawing together in sympathy.

For a year we lived on in silence, and then the old home became distasteful to me. My father's coldness chilled me. He never interfered with my ways, but there was nothing to interest me in his undemonstrative, repelling attitude. I longed for something to come

into my life, some element that would break the monotony and make my sorrow less hard to bear.

Ah! I know now that had I gone to my father and in gentle, loving tones told him of my loneliness and pain, he would not have repulsed his child. Or had he approached me in tenderness and spoken of our mutual loss and of the sadness it brought, we would have been drawn together and our lives made more rich and full of harmony. Alas! how many go through the world misunderstanding each other, and missing from their lives the gems of sympathy and affection that lie just within their grasp. At sixteen I began to look around me for the companionship I craved. The young people of the village jarred upon me. They were robust and full of gayety — I was delicate and dreamy. Books and music were my delight; merry-making where rude jests and sentimental songs were bandied about were my especial abomination. I wished my father would sell his place and move away, but I never dared to hint at this, for I knew he would not listen to it.

About this time my father, who kept the only store in the village, engaged a young man from a neighboring town to take charge of his business in the store while he attended to some other matters that were awaiting settlement. The new-comer was to board with us, and in making ready for his appearance I aroused somewhat from the lethargy that had enshrouded me. Joel Howard proved to be quite prepossessing in person and in manner; rather more refined and quiet than the young men I had been accustomed to. He seemed quite studious, too, and devoted such of his time as was not taken up with his

duties in the store to his books. His presence in the house gave me something to think of, and in attending to his comfort I learned to look for his coming, and to miss him when he left us to spend his Sabbaths with his own people in another town.

I cannot tell when I first attracted the serious attention of Joel, but it came about in time that he began to show me little courtesies such as I had been unused to; and as time passed these deepened into more marked attentions, until it was whispered through the village that "Young Howard and Baker's daughter are likely to make a match."

My father did not oppose our companionship, and before I was seventeen he was called upon to lend his approval to our betrothal, which preceded our marriage but two months.

I was but little more than a child when my marriage took place. I knew nothing of the ways of the world—absolutely nothing as to the responsibilities and cares of married life. I was a good housekeeper, and could care well for the bodily comforts of those I had to look after. This was more than many girls as young as I could say; but to take on myself the duties of wifehood, I should have gone through years of experience and training in advance.

Of my husband's people, or of his former life, I knew but little, though I will say that they proved to be all that I might desire in point of character and reputation. Whether I at first really loved him, or was only charmed by the entrance into my life of new companionship and interests, I am unable to say. He seemed to be devoted to me at the time of our union,

but afterward, when plunged in his books, he forgot to give me the tender smile and word of love I craved; and when so intent on making money that he could spare to his home only those moments devoted to eating and sleeping, I sometimes doubted if he had ever really cared for me.

For over two years, life after marriage went on much as it was before, only occasionally there came into my experience a pleasurable diversion, for sometimes when going away to visit his relatives, or to purchase goods for the store, my husband would take me with him for a few days. Father had given up the management of the business to Joel, but we all still lived together in the house where I was born. But soon a change came: my father suddenly died. He had been in his usual health when he went out to the barn to see to the horses—for he never would trust the care of those animals to any one but himself. Not coming in as usual, we went to look for him and found him speechless upon the hay. We did all we could for him, but before morning he had passed away without one word to the daughter who loved him.

We still continued in the old home after my father's death. My husband enlarged his business. The village was a growing one, and a manufacturing interest that had been opened there was calling people in from other districts. We were considered the "well-to-do" persons of the place, and were in consequence rather looked up to by our neighbors. Whether it was this that whetted the appetite of my husband for greater ventures and larger profits, or whether he was always more ambitious than I realized, I cannot say, but it was

not long before he began to make investments out of town, and to turn his attention to other interests besides those he possessed in the village of Layton.

As time passed, Joel Howard bent his energies more and more to the task of making money. He seldom gave me an hour now of his time; no longer he paused of an evening to read me a chapter from some interesting book, or to retail to me some piece of news or bit of pleasant gossip that he had heard through the day. Money he did not spare me, books and magazines with which to satiate my intellectual appetite were mine for the asking. Hired help for the housekeeping was provided me. But the tender sympathy, the genial association, the leisure to discuss what I had read and pondered, were denied me, and I felt as one starving in the midst of plenty.

It was therefore a relief to me when my husband proposed to settle our affairs in Layton, and to move to Concord. He had interests in the latter place that demanded his attention. He assured me I should find the society in the city that I craved, and altogether it would be much better for us both. I snatched eagerly at the offer, and it was without one feeling of regret that I gathered my effects, and bade good-bye to the home that had claimed my life from its birth. Only once I faltered, and that was when, bending over the turf which covered the remains of my parents, I plucked a tiny sprig of green from the grave of my mother, and pressed it to my lips. At that moment a sense of suffocation and a feeling of despair fell upon me. It was as if I were again taking leave of that most beloved of all beings, and as if I were voluntarily

parting from her. Had I until that moment, through all my loneliness and heart-hunger, been unconsciously guided by the spiritual power of my sainted mother, and was I, by the new steps I was taking, about to close my life to her gentle approach? Some such dim idea floated through my brain, but so vague and undefined that I lost its meaning, and in a moment the sensation passed away.

I shall not describe the flitting, nor the getting settled in my new surroundings. Before my twenty-first birthday I had found a place in Concord society. My husband was rapidly growing rich. His business favored him, and his new investments promised well. The old life had been left completely behind us. I was no longer the village maiden, misunderstood, and craving companionship; no longer the lonely wife, forlorn and unhappy in her own home, while he from whom she desired sympathy spent his hours in studying "securities" and "loans," "mortgages" and other financial lessons, for I was fast learning to look abroad for those satisfactions that I could not find within. My home was the model of a well-regulated household, handsomely furnished, and affording hospitality to the friends who gathered beneath its roof. My husband was proud of its mistress, and gave me to understand that I could do as I pleased in its management, so long as I did not tax his time and claim too much of his attention.

CHAPTER III.

NEW EXPERIENCES.

HAVE I told you that I am now a spirit; that for years I have walked the plains of immortal life, and gazed into the depths of human nature from spiritual places? Yes, it is true, I am no longer a creature of the flesh, subjected to its limitations and governed by its conditions. My story is told not for any personal gratification, but to teach you something of the psychological laws, the subtle forces, the magnetic impulses that affect human life, a knowledge of which every heart should gain for its own protection.

At Concord I plunged into the delights that social recognition opened to me. I was not in any sense dissipated, as I eschewed late suppers, and early morning hours for retirement, but I visited and entertained, and lived in a whirlpool of excitement that had been altogether foreign to me, and upon which the spirit of my puritanical father must have looked with the gravest censure.

The financial interests of my husband often called him from home for days at a time, but I did not feel these longer absences as much as I had formerly done his evenings out. For I had other things to entertain me than I had found in my earlier home. He was polite and considerate toward me always, at home or abroad, but the little expressions of tenderness and regard that a woman prizes so much, and which from

him had won me at first, were seldom uttered. I do not now think that they did not stir within him, but that the multiplicities of care that claimed his mind in material life made him unconsciously ignore the delicate sentiments that keep bright the ties of affection.

Among the new acquaintances I formed was a young lady of ease and culture, whose frank, open nature and piquant face quite attracted me. Sibyl Barton was the gayest of sprites, and never failed at party or soiree to make up the life and animation of the set. Sometimes at my own entertainments a spirit of listlessness and ennui would seize upon me, which, in spite of all that I could do, would have been noticed by my guests had not this invaluable ally come to my aid, and by her witty sallies not only aroused me from my inertness, but also electrified the company.

Therefore I came to recognize Sibyl as my chief assistant in any social plan I had in view, and the young lady became a frequent visitor in my home. At the table her sparkling repartee and amusing chatter kept things lively, and I was more than once delighted to find my usually subdued husband aroused from his abstraction to bandy words with the brilliant girl who could win his attention, and who dared to rally him upon his silence.

There was something electrical about this creature: in figure slight and willowy, with eyes of purple blackness — at one time melting in their beauty, at another lustrous, and keen, and shifting, as the merry sentence fell from her lips; folds of crapy-black hair, puffed back from a broad white brow; hands and feet that seemed never still, — she brought with her a sense of

animation and of power such as one sees in the restless, moving tides that ebb and flow from shore to shore. Sibyl's taste in dress was perfect: creamy fills at throat and wrist softening the rather brilliant folds of her garments, gave an air of daintiness to the whole figure, which won many a glance of admiration from the circle of friends that gathered around her.

I was slight and pale, with hair of chestnut-brown and eyes to match. Nothing remarkable about me in figure or countenance, and I realized the contrast between the bright girl who graced my board and myself. But I never cared much about my own appearance. I tried to dress in neatness and with taste, and as I received the compliments of my best friends on my costumes, I suppose I succeeded in making a presentable appearance. I had the love of an enthusiast for the beautiful. A handsome picture, or a graceful piece of sculpture, would hold me for hours; while the face and figure of a beautiful woman attracted me so that I would gaze until ashamed of my seeming rudeness. Therefore I liked to gather fine-looking people around me; and the brilliancy of Sibyl Barton, both in person and in mind, was a source of enjoyment to my æsthetic heart. Gradually, I cannot tell how or when, there came to me the conviction that my husband—the grave, almost taciturn, quiet man of business—was bestowing a degree of attention upon this flashing girl such as he had never given to me. Not only did he attend most assiduously to her wants at the table, anticipating the servant in that line, but he sometimes neglected his papers and accounts to take her to drive, or to remain by her side for an evening's entertainment. At first I was sur-

prised, then amused, that any one could win Joel Howard from his ambitious pursuit of wealth; but after awhile my womanly soul became alarmed lest this girl should, by her electric glances and vivacious manner, complete the conquest of a heart that belonged by every law of right to me. I dared not betray my anxiety to any one. I moved along as quietly as before. Understanding not the forces of my own being, I made no attempt to engage the attentions of my lawful companion.

I thought bitterly: "I have tried to do my duty; I have been a faithful wife; I would have shown him love and sympathy had he encouraged me. I am not to blame in this. If he can be so easily won from me, *can* I make an effort to hold him?"

And so the days sped by, with no reckless action on the part of the two who seemed to me unduly interested in each other. Thoughtlessly, and without any intent to do wrong, they laughed and chatted, and seemed devoted to each other, while I, with a heart growing proud and rebellious, and full of pain, smiled at them and their folly.

Joel was called away from town for a few days, and he desired that I should invite Sibyl to spend the time of his absence with me. It was not usual for him to concern himself about my loneliness, and now, as he made this a plea for his request, I only smiled and assented.

The girl was growing distasteful to me, and yet there was a fascination about her presence that I, as well as others, felt. She seemed to understand the source of her power and to make the most of it. She talked with

her eyes and smiled with her whole body. She was always in motion. If one was sad, she might brighten him up; if dull, she could sharpen his wits; if sulky, she might challenge and inspire his good nature. But to a sensitive, sorely-tried spirit, she brought only exhaustion and a weakening of the vital forces.

The days sped away without remark. Sibyl drove or walked as she chose, I seldom accompanying her, for a nervous headache seemed to afflict me constantly. Our usual train of callers appeared, and to my guest I assigned the task of entertaining them—one that suited her well.

It was ten days before Joel returned. I had grown almost moody in my sense of loneliness. The very sound of the piano, as Sibyl fingered the keys with skillful touch, seemed to crush my spirit; I longed for something or somebody to bring me strength. My callers seemed frivolous, my home associations unsatisfactory. Was this city life that I had longed for palling upon me? Oh! for the days of my girlhood, when a mother's faithful breast held my tired head and welcomed the childish confidences of her daughter. Even the later years of loneliness with my stern, sad-faced father, would be peace compared to the days of trial that now seemed bearing down upon me.

I missed my husband very much in these few days. I should be glad to have him return; I would try to give him an affectionate greeting. If he was undemonstrative, had not I, his wife, a right to show him that I was not indifferent to him? Hitherto, through my natural timidity, I had never offered a caress where it had not been requested, but now I would show him

my heart and let him know that I welcomed him gladly.

It was as if some kind angel stood by my side to show me the true path of conjugal duty. In the depth of my soul I felt that I might awaken my husband from his dreams of wealth and teach him of a happier, more satisfying life than that we had entered upon.

There came a dispatch from my husband that he would be home in time for dinner on Tuesday, and that he would bring a friend with him, a gentleman who was interested in some business schemes that Joel had opened before him. At the appointed time they arrived; everything about the house was in the utmost order to receive them. Sibyl, in black silk and jet, with a scarlet lily at her throat and another in her dusky hair, made a complete foil to me in my wine-brown satin and snowy laces, but I was conscious of looking my best, and I did not feel at all envious of her attractions.

Of course, in the presence of our guests, I could do no more than return the quiet caress my husband bestowed upon me, but I threw a little extra warmth into my manner as I did so, and whispered, "I am so glad you have come," in his ear. The effusion, however, with which he and Sibyl greeted each other was not lost upon me. One would have thought them devoted friends who had long been parted. All through the dinner and during the evening their attentions seemed to be for each other, while upon me devolved the task of entertaining the stranger whom Joel had brought home with him.

Edson Marks was a man of medium height, well built,

with no superabundance of flesh, somewhat impressive in appearance, rather slow in motion, as if always upon his guard, with gray eyes and light brown hair. In age he might have been from forty to forty-five.

What was there about this man that at our first meeting repelled me? His respectful attitude toward me was sincerity itself. In manner he was polished, in speech gracious, and in person faultless. His smile came slowly, but it was a genuine one. Yet when his white hand touched mine in greeting it sent a chill through my frame, and when his pleasant voice first fell upon my ear it grated harshly on my sensitive nerves.

As I conversed in my most agreeable tone with this stranger, I did not miss the interview passing between the other two. I scorned to listen to their words, but the gay badinage, the light laughter, the utter gayety of the pair did not escape me, and I resolved to reserve the little tender speeches that I had framed for my husband until some time when he was not enthralled by the presence of this siren.

CHAPTER IV.

AT CROSS-PURPOSES.

I DO not blame any one for what followed. Man understands so little of himself and of the laws of his being that he constantly errs through ignorance. Struggling along amid the confusions and the temptations of life, humanity learns its gravest lessons and gains its most important knowledge through the experiences of mistake and failure, the discipline of effort and trial. Encompassed by forces it does not understand, swayed within and without by those subtle laws that in their operation may move the physical universe, attracting certain atoms to each other and repelling others, centrifugal or centripetal in their action; in one manifestation known as the law of gravitation, in another that of chemical affinity, and in still another recognized as the operations of electricity, or holding power over the individualized human life to move it forward in one single line of progress or experience, — mankind has yet to learn of its own possibilities and to recognize the magnetic powers contained within its organism. When a true spiritual understanding is reached, men and women will become self-poised, calm and untrammelled by the chains of error. Holding a proper control over the forces of their own natures, theirs will become highly disciplined, self-governed, well-balanced lives, attuned to harmony with the laws

of the universe and brought into sweet accord with the conditions of a perfected existence.

There was no scandal attached to the friendliness between my husband and Sibyl Barton. No breach of moral law on the part of either was contemplated, nor did I for a moment assume such. It troubled me only that he should be attracted by this girl to such a degree as to bestow upon her such smiles and words of compliment as I had never received from his lips. She seemed to arouse in him an undercurrent of gayety that had lain unsuspected in his nature, and also to draw to the surface an interest in life outside of the dry details of business and the money market; an undertaking which it seemed the duty and the privilege of his wife alone to do, but which I had never the courage nor the thought to attempt.

As I have hinted, I neither understood my husband nor myself. At the time of our marriage I should have been still studying my books, or roaming the fields. I was unprepared to cope with the realities of life, or to mingle with the world. Joel's lover-like attentions won my lonely heart, and I seized upon them while they remained; but when he allowed them to subside before the growing demands of business, I made no effort to retain them, but proudly and sadly retired within myself, drifting further and further away from him as the years passed by. I now know that the brilliancy of the girl who attracted him for awhile held a charm for the man of business, because it brought something new into his life. In spite of himself he was growing weary of the perpetual whirlpool of business — he wanted something to draw him

out. We had no children to clamber upon his knee, and to cheer the house with their ringing laughter. His wife he considered a delicate, nervous woman, one to be let quietly alone, instead of one to whom might be imparted the hopes and plans and ambitions of his own more vigorous nature, and so he fell into the mistake of holding from me a knowledge of himself, while I also neglected to let him into the secrets of my heart.

I think if Joel had been blessed with a sister like Sibyl, he would have as readily turned to her for soul refreshment after office cares as he did to this winsome stranger, but I did not realize this as fully then as I do now,—so full of misunderstandings do mortals become,—else I would have been spared many a heart-ache and hour of anguish.

Our guest, Edson Marks, remained in Concord three days; the business that had brought him threatened to recall him to our home at no distant day, and it was with a feeling of pleasure that we heard the announcement. The vague uneasiness that had assailed me on my first meeting with the gentleman had disappeared, for during the few days that he remained our visitor, there ran such a vein of cordiality through his demeanor, such a hearty, genial air, as to thoroughly dissipate the atmosphere of distrust he had at first introduced to me. His manners were perfect, his bearing excellent. We found him to have special powers of entertainment. He had moved in the first circles of society; but what was more pleasing to me he was a well-read man, and seemed to enjoy the works and authors that were my special favorites. In discussing points of mutual interest my guest and I became

thoroughly acquainted, and when he left my home the parting was as with a friend of long standing.

Sibyl Barton returned to her home the day following our guest's departure, and my husband and myself settled down to the old life, he as engrossed in his papers and stocks as formerly, I, as usual, too reticent and timid to make any advances into his confidence. Thus matters stood when Sibyl Barton announced to us at luncheon one day — into which she had dropped at her own invitation — that her father, with whom she lived alone, had been summoned West on a business tour of three months, and deplored his absence as one likely to be of great loneliness to her. On the instant Joel brightened up, and in his quiet, decided tone — just now tinged with animation — said:—

“Why not spend the time of your father's absence at our home, Miss Barton? I am sure my wife will be charmed with your company; she is alone so much I know it must be dull for her. You will be companions for each other.”

What could I do or say? The tone was so cordial, so sincere. Had I been true to myself, and uttered the protest rankling in my heart, I should have wounded my husband and offended our visitor. So I stifled my annoyance, and with a smile on my lips seconded, as warmly as I could, the invitation thus heedlessly given.

It was accepted, and in a few days acted upon. There was very little difference in our life, save that Sibyl attracted the smiles and jests and cheerful glances that I would have prized, and that to enjoy her company my husband forsook his tasks on more than one occasion.

Ten days following the girl's advent into our home,

Edson Marks appeared for an indefinite time. Daily he was closeted with my husband, canvassing with him certain speculations in which they were interested.

The visitor brought an agreeable change to my life. In his conversation I found abstraction from the cares that assailed me. In listening to his rendition of some favorite author I ceased to annoy myself concerning the girl who with gay song or witty speech held the attention of Joel Howard. There was a strange fascination about this man that inspired me. I came to look for his presence, and to miss him if he were absent. I smiled to myself, and thought, "If Joel can find entertainment in the companionship of another, he will see that I can do the same."

So time wore on. In the desire to pay my husband back for his neglect of me, and in the relief I found from my own foolish thoughts, while listening to the words spoken or read by this positive, strong-minded man, whose personal magnetism and will-power were so alive as to influence all who came in contact with him, I did not dream of the danger that surrounded me, or of the abyss I was nearing.

Day after day I dwelt in the poisonous atmosphere, innocently pleased at the approach of the man who by his powers of entertainment made the hours delightful to me, innocently regretful when outside duties called him away. How, or when, or where, I first began to think with despair of the time of actual parting, I cannot say. I had by this time convinced myself that Joel had never loved me, and that my hold upon him was distasteful to him. Sometimes I thought I would go away and leave him forever. It was so bitter to remain

a clog upon one who did not care for me — and through it all the thought that I was learning to look to one whom in honor I could *not* love, was unbearable to me.

I wish to hasten over this portion of my story, for even now it is too painful for my contemplation. Swept along by the whirlpool of circumstances, I not only listened to the whispers of the man who would have been my destroyer, but I silently consented to fly from the home that had been so full of misery to me. We were to meet in a distant city, each of us to travel thither alone and by different routes, that our flight need not be discovered, from which point we were to take passage by steamer for Europe. Three days after the departure of Edson Marks from my home I secured what valuables and money I possessed, packed a small satchel of clothing, and with a brief note to my husband to the effect that he would never see me more, I left the house never to return.

That night I passed in a Boston hotel — but such a night! God grant no human being may ever experience the like. As yet I had committed no criminal act. My error had been in receiving the attentions of this man, whom in spite of all I *did not* love. He held me as in a thrall, he was in my thoughts day and night. I had consented to fly with him across the waters, and yet had my husband come to me then and there I would have died at his feet for one word or smile of his love.

How I wanted him that night! How I prayed and longed for him! Surely he had found my note — would he not seek for me? The prayer of my mother for the erring came to my lips. *I* was the sinner who needed mercy. Would not the dear Lord send me some

strength in my extremity? I did not lie down, but paced the floor till morning dawned. Once I held a small knife to my breast and deliberated whether it would not be best to end my struggles forever, but something held me back; and a power I did not understand impelled me to go on in the journey I had undertaken.

The next day I started forward, and in twenty-four hours had joined the man who had beguiled me away. One conviction had come to me—I must break the spell that bound me, I must be *nothing* to this man. Why I did not attempt to avoid him, instead of keeping our appointment, I did not then understand, but now I know it was because his psychological power still impelled me forward, though higher powers were at work to rescue me.

Well, we met, but it was a stormy interview. I absolutely refused to go with him across the deep sea. He taunted me with having deceived him; called me foolish; told me my husband despised me, and that he would get free from me and marry the girl whom everybody knew he cared for. He made me desperate, but I was unyielding. Every moment the power he had held over me seemed to weaken. In my heart I prayed for guidance, and I believe it was given to me. At length the man left my presence baffled and disappointed. He evidently expected I would remain at the hotel through the night, but I slipped from the house and took the next train for Philadelphia.

I had no thought of returning home. Who would believe my story? No one would acquit me of guilt in the escapade I had made. I had no doubt my husband

and Sibyl Barton knew I had fled to Edson Marks, and the thought of facing them again was horrible to me.

I secured a quiet room in the city and settled down to contemplate the situation. I was an outcast and an alien, absolutely without home or friends; swept into this condition by forces beyond my control, and completely alone and without sympathy in all the world. I think for a time I must have been dazed, for weeks passed before I fully understood my position or made an attempt to rise above it.

CHAPTER V.

THE WANDERER.

I WOULD sit for hours beside the window of my little room and gaze abstractedly into the street. The quiet houses over the way, with their white shutters, seemed always closed, and no signs of life or animation about them ever attracted my attention. I took up no book or paper, nor did I undertake the simplest piece of work. I seemed only waiting, waiting for something — I knew not what. I had heard no word from home during the three weeks of my absence. Sibyl must have left our house when I was missed. I wondered in a vague sort of way, if she would ever be installed there in my place, but that was a long while to look ahead. I should be dead before then. *Was it death* I was waiting for? Not a sign of Edson Marks had come to me. I shuddered as I remembered what a precipice of ruin I had stood upon. I was exiled, bereft of home and friends, but I still retained my honor, though I smiled drearily when I remembered that the world would not believe.

As I sat thus one day, there came out of the distance down the street, a wan, slowly moving figure. It was that of a young woman, and as it grew upon my vision I noticed in a vague kind of way that her clothing was worn and faded, and seemed to be the remnant of better days. As the poor creature neared the house opposite my window, she staggered and fell, striking her fore-

head upon the marble step. The accident aroused me as nothing else had done, and starting up I sped down the stairs and out of the front door, followed closely by my landlady, whom I had summoned by my haste.

The street was usually a very quiet one, and now it was deserted. Together we lifted the fallen one, and bore her across the way into the house. She was quite unconscious, and it was an hour before our efforts to bring her to were rewarded; but at last she opened her blue eyes and gazed around her in amazement.

My landlady was a motherly old Quakeress, who managed to eke out her scanty income by letting two or three lodging-rooms in her house, and now her kindly heart went out to the wanderer, as she said: "There, there, child, rest thee a bit; it will do thee good. Thee has had a bad fall, and is weak. I will get thee a cup of tea before thee goes home." And she started from the room to fulfill her hospitable promise. At the sound of the word "home" the blue eyes filled with tears, and the stranger murmured:—

"Home! I have no home. The world is all dark and cruel to me. Oh! why did I not die as I fell!"

A fellow-feeling came to me in that moment. Here was another, younger, more helpless and hopeless than I. Another without home and friends. Was *this* the opportunity for which I had waited? Was *this* the work I had to do? "Oh! God, show me the true way!" I cried in the depths of my soul.

Passing my hand slowly over the bruised brow of the fainting girl I whispered, "You have friends here, and shall not be driven forth to-night. I will help you if I can."

"Oh! lady, who are you? You seem like an angel of light. No one has called me a friend since —"

"Here is thy tea, child," and Mrs. Showers pressed the steaming beverage she brought upon the resistless girl. Then as I arranged the pillow anew upon the sofa I bade the stranger rest a little, and motioned the landlady from the room. We held a hurried consultation in the hall, which resulted in Mrs. Showers hastening to prepare a small side-room for the occupancy of the wanderer that night.

When placed between the blankets of the bed the girl nestled down in them for a moment, and then looked up with tearful eyes, saying, "Oh! you are too good; but when you know me as I am you will despise me. I must not deceive you."

"Never mind that, now; you may tell all that you wish in the morning; but to-night you must keep quiet, for your head is badly hurt and needs repose;" and I placed my hand upon the tangled hair with a touch of authority as I spoke.

The child could not have seen more than seventeen summers, and there was an infantile expression upon the pallid face that made one feel her utter helplessness to battle with an unfeeling world. Obedient to my command she said no more, but closed her weary eyes, and in a few moments I stole quietly from the room.

I had not felt such a sense of power, such a desire for action, for many weeks as had come to me within the hour. I had needed something to arouse me from the lethargic condition into which I had fallen, and which was drawing me to the verge of insanity. The appearance of this forlorn creature, more helpless and despond-

ent than myself, had brought the stimulus necessary to recall my dazed and benumbed senses to their normal state.

I slept that night as I had not done since my flight from home. For a long time I had been accustomed to lie at night with open eyes, staring into vacancy, and with a feeling of tightness pressing into my brain, but now I experienced relief from this unpleasant sensation, and a few hours of delicious repose settled upon me.

In the morning I went to the stranger, and found her much improved after her night's rest. The kind landlady did not allow her to leave, but retained her in the modest sitting-room of the house as she brought her a simple breakfast of tea and toast. After she had eaten, we listened to her story. It was the old one of trust and betrayal, of desertion, shame, and despair. The child was an orphan, and without near relatives to take an interest in her welfare. For many months she had dragged out a weary existence, gaining a living as best she could, until at last, hungry and faint and sad, she had fallen at our doorway, while aimlessly wandering through the streets of the great city.

"I had made up my mind to die, lady," she said, gazing at me with her great blue eyes. "There is no place for me in all the world, and I thought if I could get to the waters of the Schuylkill they would hide me forever;" and she buried her face in her hands with a moan.

"Thee must stay with us to-day, child; thee needs shelter and care till thy strength returns." And the motherly Quakeress gave a gentle pat to the pillow she had brought for the girl.

That day I held a long conversation with my land-

lady. I gave her to understand that I was quite alone in the world, and that it would be my pleasure to do something toward assisting our unfortunate visitor back to the path of virtue and peace. I had quite a respectable sum of money with me, beside some valuable jewelry, and I insisted on paying a certain amount to Mrs. Showers toward the expenses of keeping the girl for a time.

The clothing of the wanderer, who gave us the name of Annie Davis, was of such a character as to require immediate attention. My own wardrobe was at present scanty, as with the exception of the heavy gray traveling costume I had worn from home and a few articles of linen I had brought with me I was without wearing apparel of any kind, and it was therefore from the more extensive wardrobe of the landlady that we determined to temporarily clothe the stranger thrown upon our care.

When we communicated our decision to Annie she looked as though she would faint; she could not believe the good news at first. When its reality opened fully upon her mind, a light as from heaven transfigured her face until it fairly shone with unearthly beauty.

In a few days a transformation had taken place in the girl. As health and strength slowly returned to her frame she evinced signs of cheerfulness and beauty that must have long been absent from her. Seated in the low rocker by the side of Mrs. Showers, clad in one of the plainly made mouse-colored gowns of that good woman, her yellow hair combed smoothly back and coiled upon her head, she presented a picture of peace that was fair to look upon. Unwilling to remain a

burden, Annie gave us to understand that she could use her needle, and as it was time for me to replenish my own scanty store of clothing I became very glad of her assistance. Until this time I had taken my irregular meals at any eating-house where I happened to wander during my erratic journeys from my room, but now I made arrangements with Mrs. Showers to board as well as lodge with her, and we three women made up our little family, the only other occupant of the house being a man about thirty years of age, unmarried, and the foreman of a bookbindery, who rented the second story front room, but whose meals were taken out.

As time wore on and the strength of our *protégée* increased, she became restless and often seemed absorbed in thought. At length I questioned her and found that her uneasiness sprang from an unhappy mind that would dwell on the past, and that needed constant employment to give it peace. As my own stock of money was running low, I knew that I must soon make the attempt to add to it, and after much thought, and several consultations with Mrs. Showers, I proposed to Annie — whom I had found to be very skillful with her needle — that we enter business together in the dress and bonnet-making line. My idea was to seek patrons among the Quakers only — the plain though often rich dresses of the ladies I knew I could fashion, and the Quaker bonnets I was sure Annie could make with a little experience.

The proposition was hailed with joy by the girl, and with the aid and influence of our landlady we at once set to work to put our plans into execution. At first we commenced in the second story square room back.

We were not long waiting for callers, for good Mrs. Showers had a large acquaintance among the "Friends" in the city; and so eloquently did she plead for us, that we were soon filled with orders for our work.

Annie had evinced a fondness for the Quaker garb, and had fashioned her own simple gingham and her one serge dress in conformity with its rules, and I had decided also to adopt it for myself. I was so tired of the world, that I gladly turned away from the old life; the sight of jewels or of ruffles and puffs and draperies saddened me, and the plain, quaint costumes of the Quakers gave me a feeling of rest.

As time passed, and our business increased, I began to consider the advisability of enlarging my accommodations for my patrons. I liked the quiet street in which we lived, and did not wish to leave it for a more fashionable quarter. I have spoken of the brick houses opposite, that in the first days of my coming had always seemed closed and without occupants.

There were two of them; small, plain and unpretentious. I learned they belonged to the estate of a wealthy Quaker, over which his heirs had been having some trouble, and the houses were unrented while the case was pending settlement. Lately the estate had been settled and the houses were now rentable.

After some deliberation — finding it suited to my convenience — I secured one of these houses; the very one on the marble steps of which Annie had struck her head at the time she first appeared to me. It was not long before my assistant and myself were established in our new quarters. We were plain people and our patrons were not showy, therefore the articles of furniture nec-

essary to the fitting up of our rooms needed to be only simple and substantial, and did not exhaust much time in their selection.

Mrs. Showers was sorry to lose her boarders, but she remained our fast friend, and on many an evening joined us in a neighborly cup of tea in our own modest kitchen. That good lady did not take any new boarders in our place, but contented herself with renting the rooms we had vacated as lodgings to some young men from the bookbindery.

I have spoken of the gentleman lodger, who was foreman of that place. He was a pleasant, well-looking Quaker, plain in manners and dress, and always courteous toward those he approached. He had occasionally spent an evening with our landlady and her boarders in the cosy little sitting-room, and invariably his presence had left a favorable impression upon us. Lately Mr. Johnson had seemed to evince a particular interest in Annie Davis, occasionally bringing a new book for her to read, or a flower or two for her work-table, and several times he had invited her to attend an evening lecture or concert with him. I watched this growing friendship almost with alarm, not knowing whither it might lead. Annie, since her coming to us, had sought constantly to show her gratitude for the home and friends she had found. She had striven nobly to rise above her unhappy condition, and I knew that only pure and good thoughts dwelt in her breast. What the past had been to her, only God could understand and judge. In moans and tears of anguish she had washed her soul white—for it was only through ignorance and because of the innocence of girlhood, that

should have been its own protection, that she had erred and suffered. This girl, now but nineteen, was industrious, pure-minded, fair-looking, an honor to herself and those who had befriended her. Was she not, then, worthy the love of a good man?

After our flitting to our own home, the attentions of William Johnson continued, our business increased, and our prosperity grew. Heaven seemed to smile upon us. Why could we not be happy together in our mutual sympathy, independent of the love of the other sex?

Realizing how affairs progressed, I held a serious talk with Annie, and advised her not to further encourage her lover until he had heard the story of her life. The girl paled to the lips at my counsel, and dropped her work with a gesture of despair. I saw then how truly she cared for this man, but I said firmly, "My dear, it is best. If you become his wife with a secret in your heart, it will blast your life. You will know no peace with its burden weighing upon you, and it will daily grow more terrible to you. He —"

"But he has not asked me to be his wife," she cried. "And if he did I could *not* open my lips on that subject."

"No; but your friends can. Let Mrs. Showers tell him the story in her gentle way; it will show us of what he is made."

I continued to plead, till, worn out with conflicting emotions, the girl consented, and I went to the Quakeress at once with my errand. That night the good lady accomplished the task she had promised to undertake, and William Johnson learned the story of Annie's life.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOUSE OF REFUGE.

SEVERAL days passed before we saw anything of William Johnson. In the meanwhile I had learned from our Quaker benefactress that she had communicated Annie's story to the man, and that he had received it very quietly.

With pale face and downcast eyes my assistant plied her needle day after day, speaking but seldom unless addressed, and paying but little attention to her meals. I could guess the burden weighing upon her heart, but no word that I might speak could bring her comfort, and so I held my peace.

On the evening of the fifth day, however, we received a call from Mr. Johnson. He entered our little sitting-room in his usual quiet manner, and no one could have told from his appearance the struggle which he must have passed through during the preceding days. At his request I left him alone with Annie, notwithstanding the beseeching look to remain that the poor girl cast upon me as I withdrew.

Afterward my companion related to me the substance of that interview. As it belonged to them alone, and as it was too sacred for the consideration of the world, I shall not attempt to depict it here; suffice it that, with a full knowledge of her past, William Johnson approached my Annie, and with a world of love and tenderness and commiseration in his heart drew her to

himself by his noble declaration of confidence and affection.

"Let the past die and be forgotten," he said, as he sealed the betrothal with a kiss. "We will live only for the future. Thy lot has been a hard one, but mine shall be the task of trying to make it brighter and brighter until the perfect day. Thou wilt find me full of imperfections, and thy patience will be taxed; but I will do my best to shield thee from the cares and frowns of the world."

If Annie found her plain and quiet lover "full of imperfections" she kept the knowledge secret, but one would have thought, as she spoke of him in his absence or smiled over thoughts of him at her work, that she considered him the embodiment of manly grace and virtue.

In three months the simple marriage ceremony of the "Society of Friends" made William Johnson and Annie Davis one. I could not consent to part with my friend, nor was she willing to leave me, and so it was decided that the wedded pair should make my house their home. The change made no difference in our simple life. Annie and I continued at our work as usual, for the bride could not rest in idleness, and the days moved on as before, only developing in my busy mind a new scheme which at length I began to unfold to my friends.

Work multiplied on our hands, until I found it absolutely necessary to look for a new assistant. In my hours of thought I had pondered over the unhappy lives of those unfortunate girls who, like Annie Davis, might be rescued from an existence of sin and misery

if but a little effort and Christian charity were exercised toward them. In the confidences that had passed between us, Annie had related many a story to me of her former acquaintances, and of their dislike to the chains that held them.

"I do not think *one* of them would continue in the old way if they found any encouragement from good men and women to leave it," she had once said to me. "I mean if some really gentle, tender woman would go right to them, and in a kindly manner try to lead them out of their sin; some one who believed they had virtue and honor left in them yet; who, while she acknowledged their mistakes and wrong-doing, could take them by the hand and let them feel a sisterly sympathy.

"There are plenty of well-meaning men and women who will preach to the unfortunate girl, and by warning and awful exhortation try to make her promise to do better. Perhaps at the very moment of their talk her heart is bleeding in shame and despair over her own unhappy life, but they do not reach it with their words, and they think her depraved and hardened in sin. They may succeed in arresting the attention and gaining the promise of a girl to try and do better, but then they do not see her again for days or perhaps weeks. In the meantime she has been misunderstood and jeered at in her honest efforts to reform. She lacks the kind word in the darkest hour of her trial; she grows discouraged and reckless, and when the missionary again appears she is considered a hopeless case.

"No," continued the speaker, in a reflective, mournful tone, "it is sympathy and kindly feeling and an in-

terest shown in their welfare every day that the poor creatures need. Had you turned me out after my coming to you I must have gone back to the old life or to death. Your kindly attentions and the temporary hospitality of dear Mrs. Showers would have gained my everlasting gratitude, but could not have saved me. But you took me in, fed and clothed me, and, what is more, made me *feel* respectable, and that turned me forever from the evil ways I had known. Not one of the poor creatures of the streets but would be glad of such opportunities as I have had. I — don't — know; perhaps Kate Arlington would laugh at and refuse them. She was a wild, reckless creature, not quite sound, I think, who would as lief pick a man's pocket as eat her dinner. I never saw her but three times, and then she frightened me with her boldness. She hated the whole race, she said, and lived to prey upon them; but I think she must have been deeply wronged before she reached that pitch, and she was the only one of those I have seen who did not weep over her misery."

What an experience my Annie must have had during the two years that she dragged out her miserable street existence. She was only seventeen when she came to me. Poor girl! As she related in a heart-broken tone something of the incidents of her mournful life I would draw her into my arms, and soothe her as a mother soothes her tired child.

Of one girl that Annie told me I longed to know more. Hattie Willis was her name, and according to accounts she must have been a gentle, timid creature re she found the life that was now ascribed to her "She was always so generous and kind," Annie said;

“she spent but little on herself, but many a dollar has gone from her purse to that of some lonely widow or some aged mendicant. I liked her so much, and many times she has implored me to leave the city, and not to remain among its temptations. She was very handsome, with clear, bright eyes, soft and dark, and little nut-brown curls clinging close to her head. She was always nicely dressed, too, no matter how slender her means, for she could do wonders with her needle if she pleased. She was three years older than I, and sometimes acted as adviser and friend to me.”

Gradually I learned the story of this woman from Annie's lips; it was not essentially different from that of many others, only that she had a mother living at Lancaster, to whom she would not turn for sympathy and succor, for fear of bringing disgrace upon that widowed mother's head. Attracted by the soft persuasions and personal influence of a prepossessing young man, Hattie Willis had fled with him from her home, only to be abandoned in a few months by the one who should have cherished her and her child. Outraged, scorned and dismayed, the girl passed through many an experience of heart-break and shame before she entered upon the life of error that threatened to engulf her soul. At the age of three, her idolized child died, and with a broken heart the poor mother dragged on her miserable way, despised by the happy, and shunned by the godly. Many times I thought of this woman, and sighed to help her. Constantly I made inquiries, but could gain no clue to her whereabouts. At last I interested William Johnson in her fate, and he promised to institute a search for her. I was in need of an assist-

ant, but I determined not to seek such in accustomed places, but to risk taking into my household some hapless creature who, in return for loving care and friendship, and the comforts of a home, would be willing to depart from her former ways, and become a useful member of society. If she could not at first discharge the duties I opened to her, I would teach her to do so, that she might grow self-reliant and industrious. My heart was set on finding Hattie Willis, and offering a home to her, but it was not until some months of our search had elapsed that we learned her address.

Through a note dispatched to Hattie from Annie, she came to us, not realizing our desire, but only to see her old friend. The two young women were closeted long together, and I knew that Annie was relating her story of the last two years to her friend.

Then came the introduction to me, and my proposition. At first, Hattie could not consider it, so unexpectedly did it come to her. She must take time to think it over. I invited her to remain a few days with us, that she might observe our mode of life. She accepted, saying she would not be missed, as she was accustomed to absenting herself from her lodgings for days together. The woman was ladylike in appearance, a little constrained, but not at all awkward. Neatly dressed, she might have passed anywhere for a person in moderate circumstances, of fair intelligence and good breeding.

Our simple home life seemed to give repose to the stranger, and I could see that she felt the magnetic influence about her. The atmosphere of the place was *restful*, and something that she sorely required. In a

few days she seemed to have become one of us, yet she persisted in leaving our home and would not promise to return. Two weeks passed, and one morning, on glancing from the window, I observed Hattie Willis approaching the house. In her hands she firmly grasped a large valise, and as I opened the door she placed it upon the steps, and said, "I have come to you, if you will take me in. I thought I must not intrude on you and I would go back to the old life. But it was so hateful to me! I have suffered torments these last two weeks. If you will take me I will come — if not — then —" And the unfinished sentence ended in a gesture of despair.

Gladly I drew the woman into the house, and thus quietly did she become a member of my family. I found her of invaluable assistance to me, for, as Annie had said, she was a very skillful needle-woman. In a little while she too adopted the simple garb of the "plain" people, as a relief, I think, from the tawdry finery that she had been accustomed to see decking the forms of her unfortunate sisters in error. Hattie was a creature of moods, sometimes timid, desponding, sad; at others restless, talkative and full of nerve, or again rebellious, almost fiery in her self-condemnation; but I never had any difficulty in taming her excitement by soothing touch and gentle word, or of rousing her from diffidence by cheerful conversation, or by speaking of the happy, respectable life of usefulness that lay before her. We were now four in the family, Annie and her husband, Hattie and myself, but we had room in our establishment for two or three more who might need a home. So well had the efforts of my two girls

to gain an honorable career turned out, that the thought of helping others burned within me. From Hattie I learned of poor, miserable lives that might be saved for the trying, and I determined to do what I could in a humble way to snatch these brands from the burning.

I was not alone in my desire to aid the unfortunate; my family were with me heart and soul.

"Get two or three girls into the *habit* of thinking right, and I will promise them profitable employment in the bindery," said William Johnson. Good Mrs. Showers, too, promised her assistance, and would comfortably board and lodge such as William employed, at as low a price as she could possibly afford.

And so the work increased. Two girls — sisters — we succeeded in inducing to undertake the means of gaining a respectable livelihood. They were assigned a home with the elderly Quakeress and given employment at the bookbinder's. We did all in our power to make them contented. I invited them to spend their evenings with us, or to eat their Sunday dinners at our board. The young people, too, of the "Society of Friends" and the "Friendly Lyceum" joined in our efforts, and invited "our girls" to attend their meetings and their little gatherings. Decorum, order and courtesies were expected from our *protégées*, and we were not disappointed in this line.

Gradually my own little household increased to seven, for three more unfortunate women were gathered to our fold. One of these I found to be an expert in household labors, and to her was assigned the task of keeping the rooms in order. Another, who could use her

needle with industry, joined in our regular work of dress and bonnet-making, and the third — well, we did not know what to do with her at first, so utterly incapable did she seem in every department, and so unwilling to learn ; but at last I succeeded in persuading her to learn to knit and sew, and finally she became one of the most industrious of our band.

As the work increased, the necessity of its continuance grew upon me. The women who had come reported of fellow-creatures who might be induced to join us. It was painful to turn a deaf ear to any tale of misfortune. What could we do to extend our work with such limited means as were ours? At length I conceived the idea of securing the house adjoining, of throwing the two together, and of opening them as a home of refuge to as many unfortunates as they would accommodate. I talked it over with my friends and met with much encouragement. I had become quite well known among a large class of Quakers, to whom I went with my appeal.

One virtuous, God-fearing man, stern in his sense of honor, who, I suppose, had never sinned, and was severe in his judgment, pained me very much by his rigid denunciations of the erring, whom he bade seek help at the Throne of Grace, and the ten-dollar bill he gave toward my project burned in my hand like a coal of fire.

But there came to me many a word of sympathy and kindly donation of money that cheered my heart ; matron and maid gave me what they had, and husbands and fathers handed out the aid I sought with benevolent faces, and one blessed old Quaker, homely of feature and plain of manner, promised to be respon

sible for one year's rent of my new house, or until it could be made self-supporting, adding kindly : " The world is full of slippery places. If thou canst help the faltering feet to pass over them safely, the Lord will bless thee in thy work. I will be his servant to encourage thee."

In due time the plan I have outlined was accomplished, and the home I called a " House of Refuge " opened its arms to the heavy-laden and sorely-tried who sought its shelter.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE LITTLE MOTHER."

I NEITHER felt the ability nor the desire to undertake this work alone, and I spent many hours in persuading my friends that I required the use of their names as well as the unheralded assistance they had rendered me. Finally they consented to form into a sort of association for the management of the "House," with the proviso that I should stand at its head, with William and Annie Johnson, Hannah Showers, James Stetson (the old Quaker who had assumed the responsibility of our rent) and myself, forming a board of trustees authorized to receive and to expend any donations that should henceforth be made to our work.

Our task was not an easy one. The girls who filled our new home did not come of themselves and ask admission. We had to seek them out, and by many inducements and much earnest talk and patient labor persuade them to undertake the new life and the honest work that we were ready to offer them. Some of them were mild and tractable, and exhibited a conscientious desire to discharge their duties faithfully, while others were restless, hard to please, and seemed to feel any labor that taxed mind and body irksome to them. Yet I think all were grateful for the home comforts that surrounded them, and in the end even the most unruly became a contented, amiable and willing helper in our band.

We did not believe in idleness for any who had health and strength. Occupation for the hands brings strength to the mind. Industrial habits give no time for useless regrets or for idle thoughts, and it became a nice question to the management just how to find employment for the different natures that were brought to us. Several found something to do at the bookbindery. Others we furnished with needle-work of various kinds. James Stetson provided a portion of this from the dry-goods house in which he held a partnership; and in time each woman found herself leading a self-supporting, respectable life.

After months of training in housekeeping duties, or with the needle, surrounded by the moral atmosphere that we endeavored to create for them, some of our girls found situations as house-maids, nurse-girls or seamstresses in various homes in the city. We did not open an "intelligence office," but our work and purpose becoming known, good people began to watch its progress, and the more courageous gave us assistance by taking into their families as help, such of our number as had proved themselves capable and worthy, thus leaving room for other stray ones to come to us.

After a while we made a new venture. One woman, neither young nor handsome, but with traces of a hard life in her face, came seeking a companion she had once known. I hardly know how it happened that she consented to remain with us a while, but suppose the quiet atmosphere of the place attracted her storm-tossed spirit. This woman had a deal of native energy and shrewdness. She had at one time held the position of head cook in a hotel, and understood the culinary depart-

ment thoroughly. One day Mary surprised me by offering to teach some of the girls all sorts of cookery, and as I saw she was in earnest, and thinking it would draw her attention from the old life, I consented for her to do so. Mary found willing, if at first inexperienced, pupils in her class, and it was not long before the snowy loaves of bread and delicious cakes, with other toothsome edibles that came fresh from their hands, attested to the good use our cooking-school had made of its opportunities. But the class was expensive, and then came the question how it could be made remunerative. After much consultation we decided to open a pastry-cook's establishment, and we secured a portion of Mrs. Showers's house opposite, in which to exhibit our wares. Soon there began to come in orders for bread and cake and biscuits, jellies, preserves and other dainties, as the reputation of our culinary department spread. The Quakers, among whom we found our chief patrons, were not all as simple livers as we were in our home, and many of them indulged in the delicacies of the table. To these, our concoctions offered temptations that frequently brought to our home orders for new supplies, and thus one branch of industry opened successfully before us.

Our wards were not at any time made to feel dependent, nor did any irksome chains bind them. They were allowed to come and go, provided they promised not to seek their old haunts, or to hold association with evil. We kept a strict watch upon them, but did not allow them to see it. We gave them opportunities to listen to instructive lectures, or to visit socially together; and when they had become competent to pursue any em-

ployment they were allowed a fair wage for their services. We did not exact it, but we were always pleased to find any one of our number preferring the simple Quaker costume to that of the world of fashion—the endeavor to gain which over-excites so many minds—and eventually each one came to adopt it.

Our religious observances were after the manner of the “Society of Friends”; to spend an hour in the little quiet meeting-house of the plain people, listening to the solemn words spoken by some inspired member, or sitting in calm meditation, influenced and uplifted by the silence and the peaceful atmosphere when no mind was “moved upon by the spirit to give utterance,” was, I believe, of more real service to my girls than any other form of religious worship could have been. Few of them fell into the plain language of the people, and indeed I did not myself. While we might have passed for Quakers—from our simple garb and manner—in the outside world, yet there was enough of distinction between our apparel and that of the true “Friends” to satisfy the more rigorous of that body that we were not pretending to be that to which we were not entitled by birth or training.

From the first—led by Hattie Willis, I think—the girls began to look to me as an instructor and adviser. Whatever confidences they had to give were poured into my ear. If one was in trouble, or wanted advice, she was sure to ask a private hearing from me. I tried to meet them always with sympathy, and with such kindly counsel as seemed best to my judgment. I interested myself in their affairs. I had nothing to live for but these poor creatures, and the thought of

encouraging them to lives of usefulness was a pleasure to me.

I came to hold a deep-seated and genuine affection for "my girls," as I always called them, and it was not long before they began to show their confidence and love by calling me "The Little Mother."

I was more proud of that name than any high official can be of his well-won title. Though I had been denied children of my own, yet the instinct of motherhood was strong within me, and the charge of these creatures—many of them more helpless at first than babes—brought a blessed contentment to my heart; while the salutation "Little Mother," made by women some of them even older than myself, gave me a feeling of satisfaction that cannot be described.

Our management found but few offences on the part of its wards, and we had serious trouble with only one of all who came to us. Jane Allen was a turbulent creature, and sought to sow dissension among her associates. At length I was forced to talk seriously to the woman, and she withdrew from my presence sullen and silent. The next day we missed Jane, and a search revealed the fact that she had decamped with a number of articles belonging to the inmates of the house. We instituted a search for her, but without learning her destination, and we never saw her more.

Considering the lives of hardship they had led, the serious exhaustion of mind and body that assailed them of necessity, it was surprising how the girls rallied and gained vigorous health after coming to us. But one frail little creature, weak and helpless as a child, failed from the first. How grateful was she for every little atten-

tion bestowed upon her! How she clung to me in her hours of terror when dreading the approach of death; and how eloquently she thanked me with her violet eyes as I softly spoke of hope and faith and a heavenly Father's love. Her story of innocence and trust betrayed was the saddest of the sad, and I could only pray for peace to come to the soul of Lizzie Wing as I folded her white hands for their last rest.

During the four years that I remained the nominal head of this home, none of my girls entered into the matrimonial state. Though I considered that they had nobly redeemed the past, and that living the life of honest industry, with their souls filled with high effort and pure thoughts, they were just as free from stain and as worthy of regard as the members of the opposite sex whom we came in contact with, yet I did not encourage them to contract the marriage relation, for I believed that each one could find an honorable career and prove of service to her kind just as well without the assumption of those duties. I believe in the sanctity of marriage, in the purity of the home circle, and in the foundation of society upon the family relation, but so many of my sex have been reared with only the aim to contract a desirable marriage, and in such woeful ignorance of the duties and the responsibilities of life, that I thought it best to lead the minds of my girls in other channels.

In time I succeeded in persuading Hattie Willis to write to her mother a full story of her life. It came very hard to her to do this, but I knew the trial brought relief to the girl. The next week brought a reply. It was a lengthy letter, filled with a mother's love and

pardon, and imploring the return of her child. The mother had moved from her old home to Chester, whither Hattie's letter had been forwarded. "I am quite a stranger here," she wrote, "and no one need learn the story of your life. Come to me, my child, and rest your weary heart upon a mother's love. For each other we will work, and we shall gain a comfortable, happy living together. For over five years I have prayed for news from my absent child. At length God has heard and answered my prayer, and now it seems as though I could not wait longer to clasp her in my arms." Much more was written in the same vein, and as she read them to me in a broken voice, tears streamed from the eyes of the daughter who at length was called home. Of course I advised Hattie to go to her mother at once, and she decided to do so. The leave-taking was both sad and joyous. I was sorry to lose the friend I had made, for her many womanly qualities were very dear to me, and glad that she was to be restored to her parent, while Hattie was both pained and pleased with the prospect opening before her.

Some days after she left us I received a letter detailing her journey home and the reception she met at its end.

"Mother has a little income," she wrote, "and that, with the fruits of my needle, will support us comfortably. I am as happy as I can be; and as for mother, there is a look upon her face that makes me think only of one who has been admitted into Paradise."

Subsequent letters of cheer and affection continued to reach me, and none of the inmates of our home but who were always pleased to hear a good word from Hattie. Later, two more of our band were restored to their sor-

rowing parents, and a third was sent to an uncle in the West.

God in his own good time sent an angel to nestle in the heart of Annie Johnson, and to brighten the lives of the girls, who fairly worshiped the little stranger. Callie was a lovely babe, the idol of her parents, and a constant source of joy to us all. I think the presence of this child in the home brought a higher conception of life, a deeper spirituality to the inmates than any preaching could have done, and it was really a delight to watch the girls as they paid their homage to the tiny autocrat that had come among them.

But I must hasten on with my story. As to myself, I lived a dual life — outwardly calm and collected, inwardly living over the past in regret at its mistakes. True, I found contentment in my work, yet I passed many secret moments in sleepless retrospection. A nervous cough had settled upon my system, and sometimes spasms of pain racked my frame. Once when seized by such a paroxysm I decided to write a letter to my husband and place it where it would be found among my effects in case of my death.

And now I come to the date in which I opened my story. As I related in my first chapter, I had been taken down with pneumonia, and for days, in spite of the care bestowed upon me, my sufferings were intense. At length I seemed to feel peace of mind and ease of body. I sank away into what seemed a sleep of roses, as I have described, only to find myself mysteriously conveyed to my former home in Concord, where I discovered the blindness of my husband, and the true story of his attention to Sibyl Barton, now and long since

the happy wife of my husband's confidential clerk. I have told how I was drawn from this scene just as I beheld the spirit face of my sainted mother, and by an irresistible power conveyed back to my chamber, where I beheld an outstretched inanimate form upon the bed, and a group of weeping friends around.

I had no idea of the lapse of time, but now know I must have lingered amid those scenes for three days. I was troubled at the grief of my friends, and wondered that they did not listen to my words of comfort. What was it that grieved them so sorely? A sort of dreamy condition hung about me, and I did not clearly understand anything. Not until the body was placed in the simple casket, and I read the words "Dorris Howard, aged twenty-eight," did I realize what had happened. I was dead then, dead! and that pallid form had been my body. How very strange! This was not at all what I had imagined death to be. I lingered until after the simple service, and the consignment of the body to the tomb. Then I felt a sudden snap, as though some cord binding me had been severed. I felt free, and a joyous thrill swept through my being at the thought. No more I pitied the weeping women. "They will get along nicely," I thought. "William and Annie will manage the home, and its friends will see to its interests. I must go to my husband, who needs me, and seek his forgiveness."

I had no thought then of a spirit world. I knew nothing of it. I only remembered my former home, and the hapless man who had been stricken through my mistaken flight.

How I traveled to him I do not know, but it seemed

but a moment before I was by his side. I lingered, hungry for a glance of recognition, or a word of forgiveness from him ; but he knew nothing of my presence. There were days when he seemed bowed beneath the weight of his misfortunes, and others when his cheerful demeanor and energetic speech told no tale of the sorrows he had known.

James Eastham had entire charge of my husband's finances, and was often a welcome visitor in the house, and on many occasions his wife, Sibyl, came with him to cheer the lonely man with her pleasant speech and bright presence.

William Small, the amanuensis of my husband, was a slight, delicate young man, to whom I felt especially attracted. When he was present I seemed to gain power to come nearer the blind man, and certainly I could hear more distinctly and see more plainly in his presence than when he was away.

One day a letter was brought into the library, which I recognized as that I had penned for my husband's eyes alone. It must have been found after my decease and forwarded to its destination.

As was his custom, William Small opened the envelope and began to read its contents to my husband. As its import dawned upon him, the face of Joel grew ghastly white, and he leaned forward in an intense, listening attitude, painful to see, as if to drink in every word of the letter in which I had written a plain statement of my flight, its cause, its results, and of my subsequent career.

I was no less excited than he, as I too listened to the reading. Spirits can feel deeply and suffer strongly.

They are all *nerve*, all *sensation*, all *perception*. I had passed through so much of sorrow and regret that I seemed to quiver now in every part of my being, and as the wail of his tortured heart smote upon me, "Oh! Dorris! Dorris!" I felt a sense of suffocation, and in a moment I knew no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

WHETHER my lapse of consciousness was of long or short duration I cannot tell, but when I became aroused I found myself no longer in my husband's home. I was alone, and as I raised my head from its soft pillow to gaze around me, I realized that I had never seen this place before. My couch was one massive bed of roses — creamy white, and dewy sweet. So thick and luxurious did it feel that I wondered from whence all the flowers could have come of which it was composed. The couch seemed to be in a sort of pavilion, overhung with slender vines, through the swinging leaflets of which I could behold the trees, and shrubbery, and blooming flowers, together with the flash of fountains and the gleam of statuary of the grounds without, the whole enveloped in a soft and mellow light that gave a peculiar golden tint to the atmosphere, very restful and soothing to the eye. Lulled into a dreamy quiet by the loveliness of the peaceful scene, I sank back upon my fragrant cushions, and lay with open eyes inhaling the perfume which seemed to waft great draughts of strength throughout my entire being. I was not conscious of the passage of time, but seemed content to let the moments fly unheeded, nor did I trouble my mind as to my surroundings, for a conviction was borne in upon me that I had a right to be here. Thus I lay until a movement or rustle of the leaves attracted my atten-

tion, and looking up I beheld a glorious face beaming upon me. I say glorious, because the light of maternal love and tenderness upon it seemed fairly to transfigure the lineaments, yet I had no difficulty in recognizing the countenance of my long-lost mother.

She smiled upon me, and stepped forward. How gracefully she moved, with a gliding motion, as though her feet touched only upon air. How beautiful she appeared in her draperies of creamy white, as though they had borrowed a tint from the golden atmosphere. As she spoke her voice sounded like music in my ears, so low and sweet and thrilling were the tones, and I felt myself raised up, with no apparent volition of my own, and drawn toward that tender parent until we blended together in one divine embrace.

"Welcome, my child, to our heavenly home," were the words breathing from my mother's lips. "I have long waited for this hour, so full of joyful reunion, so full of perfect peace."

I did not lay my head upon her shoulder as in childhood's days, but instead I seemed to be drawn right into her heart. It was such a feeling of rest, of joy, of satisfaction, that filled me, yet I despair of making it plain to mortal comprehension. I spoke no word, but the fullness of my soul was eloquent with language, and my mother was at no loss to interpret it. Thus we stood in a rapt embrace, the mother all spirit, purified, radiant, almost transparent in her spiritualized being, the daughter but partially transfigured, a creature neither wholly of heaven nor earth, breathing in the glories of celestial life, yet still holding something of the conditions of the earthly existence. The garments I wore were soft, but

not of that luminous quality that made my mother's robes seem to emit gleams of light as she moved. My arms and hands were white and smooth, but not of that delicate fiber as were those entwining me. In fact I could recognize the difference between us at once, but it gave me no uneasiness.

Presently my mother drew me from the pavilion and through a flower-bordered path, bidding me gaze upon the beauties on every hand. Nature and art seemed to have combined to make this charming spot. Was it morning or evening? I could not tell. The golden haze covered all things with a gentle light. The flowers and shrubbery glistened as with minute drops of dew. There was no dampness, but the atmosphere filled me with a delicious sense of repose. We continued on, passing beds and banks of varied-colored flowers, clumps of shrubbery, groves of trees, and paused before a modest dwelling, set like a gem of crystal amid this lovely scene. It was not large, but white and shining, with a dainty aspect all its own. We ascended the carved steps and passed into the hall, from which opened on either side rooms that I could see at a glance were the abode of purity and peace.

These apartments were not separated by walls, but defined by gilded pillars alone; each one was furnished in a different style and color, but all were so harmoniously arranged that the whole blended together, as the different parts and colors of a perfect picture blend into one harmonious whole.

My mother, standing in the midst of this exquisite scene, seemed to be the central figure, to give a touch of life and power to the surroundings. I turned to her as she

said, "This is our home. I have wrought its drapings and fashioned its appointments. Much of the material I have gathered up from your life, my child. I have labored to prepare this place for your reception. It has been nobly earned by your life-efforts for others. Welcome to your spirit home, my daughter, welcome home."

I did not fully understand my mother then, but I felt assured that whatever of material she had found for the adornment of this beautiful abode must have been gained by her own untiring efforts and earnest work. I cannot tell you how the charm of this home settled upon me. It was so beautiful, its atmosphere so filled with peace, the various appointments of the house so attractive, my mother's companionship so thoroughly enjoyable, that for days I was content to dwell amid its scenes without a thought of the past and its experiences, the future and its duties.

One day I asked my mother concerning my father, and she told me that he was absent upon an important mission; that he had changed very much during the years of his spiritual life, having softened in character and ripened in spirit; that he now condemned his former sternness, and that he felt he must labor among the hardened and the mistaken sinners, to win them if possible to a better life; that both he and she had been with me in my work for the erring on earth, and had exercised their influence upon me in helpful ways. My father was now associated with a band of wise spirits, who were exerting a power over certain mortals in various quarters with the view of bringing out a similarity of thought upon a very humanitarian

question in these different localities, for the purpose of creating a widespread public sentiment that would prove effective for human happiness.

My mother presented me to her friends, all of whom received me kindly and invited me to their homes. I visited some of them, and found each dwelling differing in construction, style and finish from the others, and all expressing, to a marked degree, the character of their inmates. The moment I stepped into a dwelling I knew from its atmosphere the disposition and nature of its people. In one, a calm tranquillity infiltrated my entire being, and the glow of tender amber light throughout its halls gave a tint of golden splendor to the place. In another home, I felt electrified by a feeling of power, and I knew that its inmates were strong and active of spirit, full of enthusiasm, and ready to dare any work for the truth's sake. The atmosphere of this abode was tinged with that sparkling blue that we at times see flashing from the electric spark, and it made one feel as under the spell of a rare stimulation.

But in the midst of the beauty and the life of my new associations I soon began to droop. Memories were reviving within me. I thought of past days, and the recollection of my husband's wrongs grew upon me. I became unhappy, until I could not contain myself. This lovely home was no abode for me while he lived in silent, darksome misery. I must go to him and seek his forgiveness.

My mother watched the struggle in my heart. To her my life was as an open book; she could read its every line, but I was not so gifted. Though dwelling in the spirit world, I had yet to learn the depths of my

own being. Others could penetrate into the secrets of the mind, but I, though a spirit, still held to earthly associations, and could not rise to the heights of information and of power that my companions had gained.

At length I told my mother of my grief, and made known my decision.

"Will you then not stay with me?" she answered. "Is not this home a beautiful one, or does it lack any charm or appointment that you miss?"

"It is altogether lovely, mother!" I cried, "too beautiful for me. I do not deserve such a home when *he* is sad and lonely. I must go to him; and not till I have gained his pardon will I return to the Paradise that you and other loving souls have created here."

And so I left her, but not without the blessing of that most tender heart. Back to the home of the blind man I found my way. Still silent and sad, living his own life of loneliness, he appeared, and I took my place beside him, hoping at some time to gain a power to burst the bonds of silence and make myself known to him.

Many weeks passed in sorrow, for the constant contemplation of Joel's darkened fate brought only pain and contrition to my soul. In physical and spiritual blindness he groped, beholding no more of the beauties of one world than of the other; and there were moments when my soul cried out in horror at his misfortunes.

One day as I sat in despair at his feet, knowing nothing but the dumb misery that had fallen upon me, I felt a gentle touch upon my arm, and in a moment beheld the cherub face of a beautiful boy of seven or eight

smiling upon me. So bright and radiant did he look that I started up to clasp him in my arms, but he only turned and said, "Come," as he led me from the room.

I followed until I found myself standing in a simply furnished apartment, in which were seated two females, the elder of whom held a pencil suspended over a sheet of paper on the table before her.

"That is my grandma," said the child, "and she writes for me sometimes. I will show you how I make her do it. This other lady is my own dear mamma. You were so kind to her when she was in trouble that she will always love you. So will I too. Listen; mamma speaks of you now."

"Are there any good spirits here to-night, mother?" one of the women was saying. "I wish we could hear from Mrs. Howard, 'the little mother,' as we girls called her. I wonder why Georgie can't find her? I should love to have her visit us."

Surely I recognized that voice. Yes, it was that of Hattie Willis, and this her home. I afterward learned from the child that his grandmother had been recently developed as a writing medium, and that frequently her hand had been used by spirits eager to communicate with their mortal friends.

The little boy now placed his hand upon the head of the elder woman, and said in a clear voice, "Grandma, I am here, and I have brought the lady mamma speaks of. She is in trouble, and wishes to reach some one in the body. Perhaps you can help her."

The woman did not seem to hear the words, but presently her arm began to tremble, and in a moment the pencil in her hand commenced to write down the words

the child had uttered, which were received with an expression of interest and pleasure by the sitters. "Now you try," said he, stepping back with a motion for me to approach.

I did so, and laying my hand upon the writer's head, began to speak; but I found that before I could frame them into words the pencil she held was already tracing the thoughts in my mind. In this way quite a message of regard and greeting was written to Hattie Willis, which she accepted with joy. I then continued that I should like to send a private communication to a very dear friend, and was invited to do so by the medium and her daughter.

As calmly as I could I concentrated my mind on the work, evolving the thoughts that I wished to express to Joel Howard, which ran from the pencil-point in words of regret and sorrow for the past, in signs of identification of my presence, and in messages of significant import to his heart alone. Without reading the communication thus transcribed, the medium folded the paper and sealed it in an envelope, but for some reason I had lost my power over her brain, and I could not give her the address for which it was designed.

That was my first lesson in conscious communion between mortals and spirits, and I had yet much to learn.

I did not leave the place for some time, but George assured me the power for the evening was exhausted, and I should have to wait another opportunity to complete my errand. I was disappointed; but yet I had accomplished much, and soon reflection brought me the comforting assurance that I had at least gained a

hearing from one still in the flesh who had known me on earth, and therefore I had found the highway of communication between two worlds.

I did not accept George's invitation to visit his spirit home, but promising to do so at a future time, I retraced my way to my husband's abode, leaving his address with the boy, who promised faithfully to give it to his grandma at the earliest opportunity.

Three or four days of expectation to me passed before the letter was brought in to Joel. It had just arrived by mail, and the amanuensis proceeded to open it at once. The pale face of the reader flushed as he read the few words of explanation penned by Mrs. Willis, and he paused as if for instructions.

"This is very singular," said my husband. "I have no belief in spirit communication. But you may as well read what the woman has written."

And with no further hesitancy the young man read, in a clear, firm voice, the words I had given a few days before.

"My God! my God! can it be true?" cried the listener in a choking voice as the reading ceased. "It sounds like Dorris herself; and much that is written was known only to her and to me. What can it mean? Have I been *wholly* blind? Oh! who shall solve this mystery?"

The young man leaned forward and said: "Mr. Howard, to me spiritual communion is a sacred truth. From earliest infancy I have sometimes beheld forms invisible to others, and listened to voices unheard by my associates. I believe this message is genuine. Fur-

ther, I believe I have seen the spirit who dictated it. She is small in stature, pale and delicate, with nut-brown hair. She comes bending over you, and grieves that you cannot see her."

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHT AT LAST.

As the young man, inspired by an influence he could not resist, continued to talk to my husband, I seemed to be drawn nearer and nearer to him, until I found myself fairly absorbed in the magnetic atmosphere of his being, and before I was myself aware, I found the speaker repeating *my thoughts*, using my familiar sayings, and urging upon the half-dazed listener an acceptance of the truths which I—or the instrument I was then using—sought to impress upon him.

I felt, rather than saw, the presence of other spirits, and it dawned upon me that they were exercising a power over the blind man to quicken his understanding, for finally I perceived what had before seemed to be clouds of vapor, generated by the doubt and incredulity and distrust in his mind, change to floating shadows, and gradually disappear, leaving a delicate mist-like halo around his brain. Then, as the voice of the speaker ceased, and the glow of enthusiasm faded from his eyes, I became conscious of the nearer approach of those intelligences I had sensed but had not seen. With them came a flood of light that illuminated the room, and enveloped the entire being of the man I longed to reach. He sank back in his chair, as in meditation, and the thoughts that went passing through his brain started out upon this golden atmosphere in lines as clear to me as the words upon a printed page. I read them with eager-

ness, and my heart thrilled with joy as I beheld the formation of new hopes, fresh beliefs, grander aspirations in the mind of my beloved.

That night a band of helping spirits watched beside the bed of Joel Howard. They exercised their soothing influence over his physical system, while at the same time quickening his intelligent understanding by their concentrated magnetism. For hours he lay pondering the problems that had presented themselves to his mind, and slowly there came to him a conviction that immortality and spirit communion are blessed truths that are demonstrable to the senses of mortal man.

Among that throng of attendant spirits I recognized familiar faces; those of friends who had been kind to me while sojourning in my mother's spiritual home, of wise teachers who had promised me their help and instruction in any hour of need; that of my own mother that smiled upon me, and one beside hers less stern and austere in expression than formerly, but now beaming with a milder light that proved my father's spiritual worth; and that of Joel's own mother, as she gazed in tender anxiety upon her son.

Toward morning the thinker fell into a light slumber through which he remained conscious of his surroundings. Now was his spirit partially disencumbered by the thralls and limitations of the flesh. Hard-headed scoffers would say he dreamed, or that his long vigils and thoughtful hours had superinduced a state of illusion. But it was not so. That stupendous power exerted upon his being by the band of watchful spirits had loosened the confines of matter and uplifted his soul to a spiritualized state, so that now as the light wings of slumber

settled over him his inner vision was opened and he beheld standing at his bedside the wife whom he had lost and mourned.

Stretching out his hands to me, he cried : "Dorris, my little one, have you indeed come to me? I have waited long."

Trembling lest I should disturb the conditions that had opened his spiritual sight, I breathed rather than uttered, "I have returned to watch over your life — to guard your days from ill. I come, imploring pardon. Forgive! forgive!"

He heard and understood, for a smile of ineffable peace shone upon his lips and through his every feature as he replied : "I do forgive from the depths of my soul, as I hope to be forgiven. But do not leave me, dear one; I need your aid."

"I will be with you," was my response, as a deep peace fell upon my spirit such as the world had never given, such as life itself has never taken from me since.

When my husband arose from his bed that morning he was as a new man. True, darkness still sealed his external sight, and doubtless it would as long as earth held him, as the best oculists in the country had assured him that the optic nerve was completely paralyzed; but light had come to his soul;—light at last, with joy and understanding; and a new conception of truth, with a higher conviction of right, had entered his heart.

That day he held a long talk with his amanuensis, receiving much information from that young man concerning the object and usefulness of mediumship, as well as of the claims, teachings and work of Spiritual-

ism. He instructed the scribe to write a letter to Mrs. Willis, acknowledging with gratitude the receipt of the spirit communication she had mailed to him, with an intimation that anything more from the same source would be acceptable, and begging the acceptance, on her part, of the enclosed draft as a token of his appreciation of the blessing she had conferred upon him.

During the weeks that followed I clung to my husband, utilizing my influence as much as possible in aiding his mind to grow strong in its new hopes and convictions. I impressed him to request his scribe to procure such spiritual literature as he — the scribe — thought useful and instructive, and many hours were passed by the new student in listening to the words of wisdom and consolation read by his companion from the works he purchased. Sometimes the amanuensis would fall into the clairvoyant state and be able to see and describe his spiritual visitants to his employer, and such moments were of priceless blessing to the eager and attentive man. Occasionally, too, Joel would sink into a spiritual condition like that he had experienced on the night I have mentioned, and for the time rejoice in the sight of his loved ones as well as in his power to converse with them.

One day Georgie came to me and said, "The wise ones say you can enlarge your sphere of usefulness if you do not spend *all* your time here. *He* will be all right if you leave him sometimes, and it will be helpful to you both, because you can learn and do many things that will give you power. If you spend *all* your time here, you will exhaust your forces; but if you sometimes go away, you can get new strength to give him when you return."

I seemed to see the force of this statement, and while I inwardly demurred at the thought of leaving my charge, I wondered at the words of wisdom thus uttered by a mere babe, but he smiled archly and continued: "I think you would like to send *him* a real good long letter, and you can to-night. Mamma and grandma will sit in half an hour, and everything is just right for you to get there. Then, you promised to visit my spirit home, and you might go with me there after you have seen them. It will do you good."

The prospect of sending a communication to my husband decided me, and at once I signified my desire to accompany the child to his mamma's home. We were not long in making the journey, for, with an intense spirit, to *will* is to accomplish, and in almost a moment we were there. It was as the child had said: I found the sitters tranquil and in good condition, and had no difficulty in announcing my presence. The women gave me tender welcome, and were only too happy to receive the lengthy message I prepared for them to forward to Joel. Then, as my power waned I turned to Georgie and said, "Now, dear child, I will go with you and be glad to see your spirit home."

We did not travel as rapidly as we had done; my will seemed to weaken; I grew languid and faint, noticing which my guide said, "You will find strength there. It is because you have expended all your magnetic powers on him, and now this last effort to send him a letter through grandma has weakened you. He held you so that he has lived in your atmosphere and drained it. The wise ones were right in saying you needed a change."

There is a passage in the old book which reads, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," and here was a living illustration of its truth. The letter that I had written Joel was sent him the following day, but I did not know that one from Georgie accompanied it, explaining to my husband that it was not wise for him to hold me every minute by his craving for my presence, as it exhausted both his vitality and my own; but if he were willing to allow me freedom to wander in spiritual realms, and to attend to such duties as would reach me in this way, I should gain power to bless his life in broader ways, and to unfold my own spiritual capacities.

In a little while Georgie, who had adapted his progress to my halting movements, conducted me within the shade of a pleasant grove, which seemed to be part of an extensive park. It was a beautiful place, its beds of flowers, tiny ponds, sloping banks, making up an attractive scene. Seating me beneath the generous branches of a noble tree, the child said: "Breathe in this atmosphere while I go to look for Lona. She is my teacher, and she will give you welcome."

He disappeared, and I rested my head against the trunk of the tree, inhaling great draughts of the life-giving air, every one of which seemed to instill new vigor into my system. The atmosphere of this place was not golden, like that of my mother's peaceful home. It was clear, but with a blue tinge, such as the waters wear in summer-time. It sparkled through and through my frame like some rare vintage wine, and gave me a strength that I felt I sadly needed. Presently my little friend returned, bearing a tray formed of leaves and

flowers, upon which rested a pile of delicious-looking fruits. "Eat," he said, placing it in my lap, and again vanishing. I obeyed. The luscious globes of sweetness melted in my mouth. There was no pulpy substance, no skin to be ejected; the whole seemed to resolve into drops of delicious nectar in my mouth. In my husband's home I had partaken of no food directly, but had joined Joel at his meals, deriving a satisfaction from the aroma that passed in vapor from his steaming food, which counteracted all pangs of hunger. Now, as I pressed the fruit between my lips, it refreshed me, taking away the last vestige of weakness and languor. Again the child returned, this time accompanied by a lady, tall and graceful, with clear, blue eyes, and smiling lips. With outstretched hand she gave me greeting, and said: "I have long waited for this day. You do not know me, but you are not unknown to me. Welcome, dear lady, and find rest in this bright spot. All these broad domains"—waving her hand over what to me seemed an extensive park—"are the homes of our little ones. Here they are taught, cared for and loved. The sparkling freedom of childhood permeates the atmosphere. The buoyancy of childish lives is felt by all who enter here. Welcome to our home."

The lady did not seem a stranger to me, and I felt at ease, as in the presence of an old friend.

"Here I am known as 'Lona,'" she continued, "but on earth I was Ann Davis. *I am the mother of Annie Davis*, whom you rescued from a life of despair in the streets of Philadelphia. I had long watched over the steps of my erring child, but could not control them till *you* gathered her in. Then I gained power to help her.

She is now a happy wife and mother, as you know, finding her blessing in the precincts of her home life, and in looking after the girls in the House of Refuge that has opened its arms to give them shelter."

Here was a pleasing revelation. I was interested, and "Lona" continued still further to enlighten me. It seemed that her great love and sympathy for the unfortunate had caused her to look after the little waifs drifting into spirit life from the streets of earth, and so she had been assigned a place as teacher and guardian in this vast spiritual park, where were gathered many mother-souls like hers, many father-hearts of benevolence and wisdom, whose work was to guide and instruct the "cast-offs" from human life on earth, and to educate them through the agency of lovely and truthful surroundings.

Hattie Willis had spoken many kind words to Annie Davis in the days of their mutual misfortune, and "Lona" had been attracted to her in consequence, so that when Hattie was called in despair to give up the life of her worshiped child, "Lona" with tender pity and gentle love was at hand to receive and bear him to her happy home in the angel world.

How clear it all seemed to me, and how happily I looked around upon the scene before me. We moved from the silent grove and came upon groups of joyous children in the parks, some following their teachers in the studies they had in hand—each demonstrated by practical illustration—some romping and roaming over the grounds, and others, new-comers, not yet grown strong, as I learned, swinging to and fro in gauze-like hammocks, or lying upon the sward, their pale faces

gaining a freshened look under the influence of the place.

I was allowed to wander at will. I entered some of the houses here, and found them simple in construction and furnishing, but pure and sweet, and filled with graceful, pretty things, such as children love. This was really a child-world, for even the men and women—wise and intelligent and exalted as they were—had entered the sphere of simplicity and guilelessness that breathes throughout the natural life of childhood. It was a vast Kindergarten, where every study appealed to the senses of the pupil, and was made plain to the growing mind through its practical demonstration in objective life.

I remained a guest of "Lona" for a period of time marking four days on earth, but to me it did not seem half as long. I had gained in vigor, and wished to return to my husband, who I felt needed me. Accordingly I bade my friends adieu, promising to return many times to them, and speeded to that mortal home where my affection tarried.

I found Joel surrounded by a few friends, among them the Easthams and our amanuensis. He was detailing to his company something of his more open experiences and teachings in Spiritualism, and they seemed to be highly interested.

A planchette rested upon the table, and the hand of Sibyl Eastham touched it lightly. "I have been told," said that little lady, "that I possess an occult power, but I have never seen any evidence of it."

I glided forward, and placed my hand on her arm. She started as from an electric shock, and shivered

slightly. Presently the planchette began to oscillate beneath her fingers, and then to strike out boldly, its pencil tracing these words upon the paper beneath it: "Sibyl, it is true, you are a medium, and I, Dorris Howard, will prove it to you. When you are alone I will come in this way to write to you. At present, tell my husband that I am here with my love."

It was a simple message, but it awakened much interest in all present, and question after question began to pour upon planchette, which I answered as best I could. After the company had dispersed, I learned from my husband's mind that he had received gratefully my communication written through Mrs. Willis, and that he had also learned of the exhaustion I had experienced from too close attendance upon him. He was now prepared to welcome me, but not to hold me by that intense longing as before. I brought him new strength that night, and remained with him as long as I could do him any good, and then retired to recuperate my forces, for his sake as well as for my own.

I did not forget my promise through planchette, and I sought the home of Sibyl at an early day to redeem it. Through the electrical atmosphere of that vivacious little lady, and by means of the tiny board on wheels, I succeeded in convincing her of her mediumistic powers. I also detailed to her an account of my unhappy suspicions in the past, asking her pardon for my misunderstanding of her nature, a boon that she freely granted. The powers thus developed in Sibyl Eastham became of great service to others, for through its agency many were brought into communion with their spirit friends.

During my periods of absence from my Concord home, I visited many places of interest on earth and in spirit life, and came in contact with mortals and spirits of various degrees of unfoldment. From the wise and benevolent of both worlds, I gained strength of character, and lessons of value. For the unfortunate I found pity, and a desire to help them. From this desire came a power that filled me with courage to labor, and gave me strength to accomplish many things. I did not forget the "House of Refuge" and its inmates, but often visited them, in company with other earnest spirits. Its good work was still carried on by friends on earth, and many a blessing fell upon them, not only from the girls who had been uplifted by their instrumentality, but also from the spirits who watched above them.

On one of my visits to the dear old place, I encountered another ministering spirit, beautiful as an angel, with radiant face and beaming eyes. With her, their dark robes lighted by the shine from her own garments, their sad faces reflecting a little of the hope illuminating her features, were two other spirits, whose magnetic emanations told me that they had not yet fully outgrown the conditions or the passions of earth. The bright being I had known as Lizzie Wing — the girl who had died in my arms at this "House of Refuge" — now transfigured into a glorified angel of ministration to others. She smiled to see me, and explained that she had found the unfortunate spirits tethered to the atmosphere of that low resort that had known them when in the body; that they could not get away from there till she came to them. Sometimes they tried, but they were always called back. They could not *live* in a truly spir-

itual world, because they were weighted by elements belonging to the grosser existence. They must learn from spirits on earth before they could arise to a conception of spiritual laws. "They were constantly attracted back to their old haunts," said Lizzie, "and as frequently absorbed in the atmosphere of their former associates, or of such as they, and thus kept living over the same kind of life they had formerly known. I succeeded in getting them here. There is a good strong influence going out from the lives of those here who have been saved from error, which has enough of physical life in it to support these two spirits in their efforts to reach something beyond. The example of 'our girls' will lead these two into the light, and help to make them pure and good."

I might go on indefinitely, speaking of the experiences and the lessons that I gained in my searchings after truth. But my story must be brought to a close.

Joel Howard still lives, his external sight closed to the beauties of earth, but his spiritual perceptions open to the light. Patiently he waits for the dawn of that nobler day when he shall don the robes of immortality, in the meanwhile receiving such tidings from beyond as "Little Dorris" is permitted to bear to him, and doing what he can to bless the world.

Edson Marks I have never seen since I left him on the eventful day of my first visit to Philadelphia. I have never been attracted to his side—nor do I know whether he is on earth or not. The psychological power that exercised its influence over me for a time, lost its hold on me forever on the day that I bade farewell to my old life in Concord, and it can never harm me more

I long since returned to my mother's home in the spirit world. Its halls are ever open to my reception; its atmosphere of love and peace invites me to rest within it. But my stay is short. Work, duty, call me in other directions, and not until all my powers for usefulness in connection with the needy and sorrowing are exhausted, will I give up my journeying to earth and be content to remain permanently in that abode of light where parental love and kindred hearts shed the glow of their divine sympathy to make each home a heaven.

With a tender compassion in my heart for those who struggle with temptation, and with an earnest desire for strength to aid the weak and lowly, let me close these pages with my mother's prayer for the erring, as listened to when a child at her knee: "Oh, Lord, be merciful to the erring. Chastise them only for their own salvation. Remember their needs, and bring them in thine own good time to thy kingdom of righteousness and peace."

THE BLIND CLAIRVOYANT.

A TALE OF TWO WORLDS.



CHAPTER I.

THE CLAIRVOYANT.

"I CONFESS I look upon this as a foolish quest, Sprague ; — we, a couple of staid, level-headed men of the world, in search of the mysterious, visiting a professional clairvoyant ; was there ever anything so ridiculous ? We shall be laughed at if it becomes known !" And the speaker, a tall, sinewy man of swarthy complexion, turned toward his companion questioningly.

The man addressed was also tall in stature, but his well-knit frame, florid complexion and large, open blue eyes, maintained a decided contrast to the one who had spoken. They paused before the steps of an unpretentious cottage, as the second replied : —

"Well, we had better go in, for this is the place where I have made the appointment, and we are expected. I am quite curious to test the powers of this lady of whom we have heard so much. We cannot be laughed at by our friends, for nearly all of them have been here before us."

"True, and she may have learned from some of them, all that is necessary to enable her to concoct a

wonderful tale for our benefit. But she cannot impose upon *me*. The woman will have to present facts, data, evidence—before I shall be convinced of her superior powers.”

By this time they had ascended the steps and pulled the bell. In a moment they were ushered into a neat little reception-room. There was nothing about the house and its surroundings, nor in the appearance of the person who admitted them—a pleasant, motherly looking woman whose gray hair plainly smoothed from her forehead, and quiet dress of black, showed no pretension to style or display—to indicate the presence of imposture. And at least one of the callers felt favorably impressed by the atmosphere of the place.

Presently they were ushered into an adjoining room, larger than the first, cool, pleasant and inviting. A large rug, in the center of the polished floor, looked like a carpet of freshly fallen snow, upon which handfuls of tiny blue flowers had been softly thrown, so beautiful was it. Chairs and lounges were draped in some soft, white material, and finished with blue and gold cords and tassels; spotless curtains fell in graceful folds at the windows; a few rare pictures adorned the walls; and one slender vase upon the mantel held a cluster of creamy roses, which shed a delicious odor through the apartment.

At a table in the center of the room sat a young woman, not more than two and twenty years of age, but so *petite*, so fragile in appearance, so delicate in her white garments,—with her slender hands clasped upon the table before her, the soft brown eyes wearing the pathetic look of those who cannot

see, the shining brown ringlets falling upon her sloping shoulders, — that one might be pardoned for taking her to be much younger than she really was.

Seats were placed for the gentlemen by the attendant, who then withdrew from the room. Turning her face in the direction of her callers the blind girl said, in low, sweet tones : —

“If you prefer, I can sit for each of you alone; sometimes I am obliged to make revelations to my visitors that they would not care to have others hear.”

She was assured that the gentlemen preferred their sitting together, and after a few moments of silence the girl began to moan as with pain, and she turned with outstretched hands to the younger of her callers, and said: “Oh! why did you do it? She was so good, so true. She loved you so deeply. Why did you leave her?” And then in tones thrilling to the heart of the man who listened with paling face, the clairvoyant revealed a vision of the past, in which two persons figured, a youth and maiden. The affections of the latter had been won only to be cast aside, and she was left, broken-hearted and betrayed, to hide her shame in the quiet graveyard.

“You are the man who fourteen years ago won the heart of Agnes, and then at the command of your stern old father cast her off, to wed another. You did not know at the time all the evil consequences of your deeds, or you would not have forsaken the poor village girl. *That* is to your credit. When you found that she had died in giving birth to your child, you hired a woman to take charge of the little one until she was old enough to be removed to the care of some more compe-

tent person. Since then you have supported your child, and provided her with an education. Occasionally you visit her country home, but by stealth. She does not know you are her father, but looks upon you as some kind guardian. Her mother was a pure, good woman, erring only through her great love for you, and paying the penalty in a broken heart and an early death.

“I am sorry, sir, to have to bring this vision before you; but it is what appears to me. Those who open it to my view are your friends. They watch over and guard your life. They know its secrets. They desire to help you out toward the light. Remorse, pain and contrition prey upon you. The wife whom you did not care for in the early days of wedlock, you have learned to love. *Her* child and yours you adore, but this other child is a ceaseless reproach to you. You dread discovery, and you are constantly upon the rack. Heed our advice, reveal all to your wife, make atonement as far as you can to your unacknowledged child, and you will find peace.”

Charles Sprague started up with a groan, and cried: “Enough, enough; I can bear no more! It is all true; you have fathomed the secret of my life, but I cannot do what you ask — it would ruin me forever!”

The strange light that had glimmered in the sightless orbs of the medium faded, and with a little tired sigh she turned to the elder visitor, who had remained an earnest listener to what had been passing, and said: —

“I am sorry, sir, but I can see nothing for *you*; it is all dark and cold when I try; there seems to be something about you that keeps me off; — only this: You are engaged in some plan or scheme that you had better

abandon ; it will only bring disaster. You may mean well"—and the inflection of doubt in her voice was not lost upon the man she addressed—"but the work threatens the happiness of one who, although he has erred, is yet good and true. He counts you his friend, betray him not."

"Evidently you cannot see anything for me, Madam, and we had better retire. My friend is quite unnerved by the strange story you have given him." And Owen Norcross rose from his seat as he spoke.

Touching a small silver bell at her side, the fair girl summoned her attendant, who ushered the gentlemen from the room and from the house, after which she returned to her charge, whom she found completely prostrated.

"Oh, auntie," murmured the seeress, "it was so hard to tell that poor man what came to me. Yet the angels say it is for his good, and eventually love will accomplish its perfect work for him. But he brought such a feeling of sadness with him. He is unhappy ; he eats and drinks and laughs to drive away memory ; and I am sure the man with him is his enemy, though he pretends to be a friend. I wish I could help him."

"There, Myra dear, you must not enter into such sympathy with your sitters, it exhausts you too much. They all have their trials and cares, and they must all bear the burdens life lays upon them. Now I will bring you a drink of warm milk, and then you must rest, for you have another appointment at twelve."

"Yes auntie, but how good you are to me. You never let me worry about anything. You are sight to my eyes and a guide to my feet. You anticipate all

my wants and attend to my comfort. You give me soothing tones when I am tired, and cheery words if I feel sad. You bring flowers to perfume my room, music to brighten my spirit. You do everything to sweeten my life and to keep my spiritual powers strong. If I seldom fail in their exercise it is because you surround me with every condition of peace and harmony." And the speaker drew the face of the plain elderly woman down to her own with a loving caress.

"It is my mission to look after you, darling. You are the only ewe lamb I have left; God has taken all my treasures but this precious one. Shall I not guard it with tender care?

"But he is all wise and merciful in his bounty to us. Though he has deprived you of that external sight which belongs to his children, he has given you the rich gift of *spiritual* sight, that compensates us for all earthly loss."

"Indeed it does, auntie. How badly I felt when I first learned of my blindness. That terrible fever burned so into my brain, no wonder it stole away my eyesight. For a year I was so unhappy, though you did everything for my comfort; then the compensation came. I could see a milder, clearer, more beautiful light than the sunshine, and in it men and women and children moved. Some of them seemed sad and lonely, but the greater part were smiling and happy, and gloriously fair. Then came mother and father and little Pearl; they told me they were happy and safe in heaven, and that if you would care for me as they advised, they would open my eyes to the angel world.

"What joy was this to me! I ceased to fret and repine.

Life was suddenly filled with new beauty, and it was a pleasure to live. Since then we have been in constant association with pure spirits, and for six years I have shown to the world what the angels have brought to me. Only, auntie dear," — and a tone of regret mingled with the words of the speaker, — "I wish we could give it freely, without money and without price."

"We must not murmur, Myra. Our guides know best. They tell us the laborer is worthy of his hire in every field; and that those who sow must have the means for scattering the seed. Mediums must be clothed and fed and sheltered. If they bring spiritual food to the human heart, the means for supplying their own physical necessities should not be denied them. Both you and I would gladly give our time and thought to this work, but we must live; were we obliged to expend our strength in manual vocations there would be no magnetism, no nerve forces, no conditions for the best pursuance of our spiritual work.

"Oh, how many times we have been told this by our dear spirit guides. We must not doubt them, my child. The world cannot judge our motives. How little it knows of the uses we make of your earnings. True, we maintain a comfortable home, but our expenses are not large, and do not begin to compare with the amount you spend on the unfortunate and the sorrowful. How many weary hearts have you comforted, dear Myra, in this city alone, not only by the spiritual tidings you have brought to them without money, but by the food and clothing and other necessities you have provided them in hours of need."

"But it is so little we can do, when there is so much

distress everywhere, auntie. I long for the day when poverty and sickness and sorrow will be unknown."

"It is a long way ahead, child, and we shall not see its dawning in our time; but I hold that every kindly word and smile, every loaf of bread or warm garment supplied a needy child, every effort made to help the unfortunate, even every unselfish thought in the heart of man, helps to elevate the race, and to strengthen the angels in their work of love for humanity. But now you must rest;" and again kissing the pale brow of her niece the speaker passed from the room.

Caroline Grey and Myra her niece lived absolutely alone in this modest home; they were gentle and refined ladies, who had known no other companionship for years. The elder had devoted herself to her widowed brother and his children during the best portion of her life, yielding up her own hopes and plans for the sake of the motherless girls who adored her. Carrie Grey had in earlier life given such promise of intellectual power and mental ability, that her friends had expected them to blossom out in brilliant productions from her pen; but in the busy life that settled upon her, the young woman sacrificed her ambition and her aspirations to the demands of stern and uncompromising duty.

When his two daughters were seven and twelve years of age respectively, Mr. Grey suddenly passed away, leaving but a remnant of his small fortune to his orphan children. But owing to the indomitable energy and courage of "aunt Carrie," these little ones never felt the encroachments of want, for she stood between them and the world like a protecting shield.

At the age of ten, little Pearl succumbed to the

ravages of fever, and passed home to the waiting arms of the loving parents who dwelt in the spirit world. Myra, too, fell a victim to the terrible scourge, from which she recovered, pallid, attenuated, and sightless; a shadowy reflection only of the bright-eyed blooming lass of fifteen, who had hitherto known only health and youthful vigor. For a year life seemed very dark and sad to the stricken girl, but then there came a wonderful boon—a revelation from *Beyond*, spiritual sight to the sightless—and through its power came heavenly comfort and peace to the little home.

CHAPTER II.

CONFIDENCES.

OUTSIDE in the warm September air, the two men who had just passed from the presence of the clairvoyant halted,—the one dazed, almost stupefied by the revelations that had come to him; the other, working up a new scheme that had entered his fertile brain within the hour, as he said: “You are overcome, Charles, by the talk of that woman; let us walk a little, while you rouse yourself. Why need you feel so disturbed? I suppose if there was any truth in what she said, it was some youthful folly that need not trouble you now.”

“Truth!” exclaimed the younger man with a vehement gesture, “it was *all* truth. Youthful folly! It was rather a piece of villainy, that stamped me a scoundrel!”

“Oh! come, my boy, do not upbraid yourself so harshly! You look upon this affair in a morbid light. You know I am your friend, and would do anything in the world to serve you. Why not confide the story to me? It will do you good to relieve your mind.” He continued his persuasive tones until the tortured heart of his companion consented to lay its secrets upon the altar of friendship.

In an hour they were seated in the private office of Charles Sprague, where Owen Norcross listened attentively to the story of past wrong-doing that fell from

his companion's lips. "I do not think you need to blame yourself so relentlessly," he remarked, as the story closed. "You were young and thoughtless, and, beside, you were under the dominion of your father. He never would have taken the girl into his family, for she was beneath you in social position —"

"What is social position," demanded Charles Sprague, "compared with honor, and refinement of character! Agnes was all that a woman should be in goodness. She was innocent, and pure, and noble. Everybody loved her. She was so gentle and loving that every child in the village worshipped her. True, she was the daughter of an humble farmer, but she was refined in manner; she only required educational advantages to make her the most beautiful and polished of her sex. When I think of all that she was when I met her, and how I, who should have elevated her still higher, only dragged her down from her estate of purity to one of degradation and shame, I could curse myself!"

The tones were suppressed, but full of energy, and Owen Norcross gazed at the speaker, as if here were a character he could not fathom, but his voice was soothing, as if addressed to a passionate child, as he replied:

"We will admit it a mistake, one of which you have repented; one that cannot be repaired. Why not let the past go, and attend to the coming time? What do you propose to do with the child this woman left, and whom you say you have cared for? You will not, of course, bring her to this city, where —"

"Heaven forbid!" interrupted his companion. "She is now thirteen years of age, beautiful and intelligent. I have spared no pains in giving the child all necessary

advantages for her education. She looks upon me as her guardian,—some sort of distant relative, perhaps,—and she must never be told otherwise. The parties with whom she resides are an aged clergyman and his wife, who know nothing of me save what I have told them. I learned of them through an advertisement in a literary paper, in which they signified their desire to take a few pupils and give them board and tuition. Olive has been with them seven years, and they are very much attached to her. I propose to leave the child with these good people indefinitely. Of course I shall settle a liberal sum upon her, but she is not to know the truth concerning her pedigree or parentage, and as there are none but myself who know where and under what circumstances she came into the world, it will not be difficult to keep the secret from her knowledge.”

“Well, my friend, you seem to have planned wisely. You require no advice from me, but you have given me your confidence, and if at any time I can serve you in this affair, you have only to command me.”

The younger man looked the gratitude he did not speak, as he contented himself with wringing the hand of his companion in silence.

Charles Sprague was a prosperous merchant, of high social position and good business standing. The only son of the late Judge Sprague of Tarrytown, he had, at the death of his father, inherited a large fortune. Before that event, however, the rising young merchant had displayed such keen business ability, that he had arrived at the head of the firm which he had first entered as superintendent, his uncle, Joseph Baker, retiring in his nephew's favor from the co-partnership.

Tarrytown had ceased to be his home long before the decease of young Sprague's venerable father, and upon his marriage with Clara York, a beautiful and brilliant society girl, Charles Sprague took up his residence in the city of Parkville, where he had already entered into business.

At the time of his marriage he had no love for his wife. He admired her beauty, and the brilliancy of her mental qualities. He was proud of the attention she attracted from the circle in which she moved. He was kind and courteous to his wife always, but demonstrative never. This had been a marriage partly of convenience, and partly to please his father; one in which affection on his side took no part, for his heart had been too fully given to Agnes Clarke—the poor girl whom he had betrayed to her death—to be easily won by another.

Clara York, on the contrary, had deeply loved her husband in the hour when she stood beside him at the altar. Knowing nothing of his imperfections, the brilliant, beautiful woman, whose charms of mind and form had attracted many suitors to her side, admired the fair comeliness and manly qualities of the one whom above all others she consented to wed.

They were suited to each other, people said. She was so dark and glowing, he so fair and cool in appearance; and many were the congratulations showered upon the pair whom the church pronounced one.

Weeks passed into months, and it was noticed that a new reserve seemed to steal over the handsome bride. She seldom spoke of her home relations, even to her own sister. She did not seem unhappy, yet a certain

frosty chill in her manner forbade the intrusion of any of her friends to the sanctuary of her inner experiences. On the contrary, the husband seemed more genial and careless in manner since his wedding day than ever before. If he had cast a load from his mind, and had bloomed into happiness itself, he could not have appeared more at his ease when in society, and the world set him down as a fortunate fellow.

In two years a charming little rosebud of a daughter, possessing her mother's luxuriant black hair, and a pair of laughing blue orbs, just the reflection of her father's own, was born to the house of Sprague, and in the atmosphere of this tiny creature the mother seemed to find a vent for the pent-up love she had nurtured in secret. A still lovelier expression stole into the eyes and rested upon the lips of the graceful woman, as she bent above the form of her babe, and from this time a new idea of life and its meaning crept into her heart.

Charles Sprague, beset with the pangs of remorse, and devoured with anxiety concerning that other child, of whose existence his friends never dreamed, failed to understand the wistful expression that he at times caught upon the face of his wife. Having no genuine love for her at the time of his marriage, he did not realize the extent of her affection for him. He believed it to be on both sides, a union for the enhancement of social positions, and he did not give his wife credit for the possession of those womanly qualities that were really hers. But he was not one to reveal his secrets to the world, and so under a mask of apparent gayety the disturbed heart of the man throbbed in painful perplexity.

At the birth of his daughter Maude, the man seemed to display a more restless spirit than before. Was it that old memories were busy with him, — or was a new revelation of the sanctity of human life, and the purity of the family relation, coming to him? Those who gazed into his heart from the higher life knew that both these causes served to stir the fount of feeling within him.

Gradually a new tenderness — born of the love that came with their child — for his sweet wife, awakened in his soul. As he watched her bending with an almost angelic smile of devotion over the infant, a realization of her worth and womanly attributes crept upon him. She was not now the society queen whom women honored and to whom men paid homage; but the gentle mother, the quiet, ministering spirit, whose presence made *home*. But as *love* grew into his soul, his manner towards his wife became more restrained. “She never truly cared for me,” he thought. “She is wrapped up in the child. I shall not disturb her with a knowledge of my feelings. If she knew the past, if she could read *my* life, she would loathe and despise me. No! it can never be, I am not worthy her best love,” — and he sighed, even while he threw a careless glance upon the woman who would have given her life for a really lover-like demonstration from the father of her child.

Thus time passed and little Maude grew in grace and beauty, the pet of her father, the idol of her mother. When the child was seven years old, Owen Norcross was introduced into the home by an old friend of the family. He was a tall, middle-aged man, dark and swarthy, apparently with plenty of money and leisure at com-

mand, had traveled extensively, and had but recently returned from a trip to Europe.

Owen Norcross seemed at once to gain an influence over Charles Sprague, and found himself a frequent visitor in the merchant's home. Mrs. Sprague did not at first admire the stranger; there was something about him that repelled her; but as the polish of his manner and the charm of his conversational qualities became known, she so far succeeded in overcoming her aversion as to make the man welcome at her table.

Little Maude, however, could not be induced to make friends with "the man with the black face" as she persisted in calling the guest, although he frequently drew upon his fund of anecdotes, such as children love, for her entertainment. The child would stand by his side, won by the charm of his wonderful stories, drinking in every word that he uttered, but if he attempted to touch her hand, or to pat her dusky curls during the recital, she would shrink visibly from him, and the moment the story was finished away would she scamper to her mother's side.

And now we come to the period when our story opens, from which we are to follow the experiences of our characters in connection with two worlds—the visible and the invisible, the earthly and the spiritual.

Six months have elapsed; autumn has merged into winter, and the frosty season melted into the tender months of spring. Nothing new has entered the lives of our people save that Owen Norcross seems to have fastened himself more securely upon the life of Charles Sprague. From being an occasional companion before, he has now become almost as a shadow to the merchant,

until their close friendship occasions remark. But with the increasing intimacy lines of care settle on the brow of the younger. It is beginning to be hinted that the elegant Owen Norcross is not the wealthy man people have believed; more than once he has appeared embarrassed for money, and Mrs. Sprague has wondered if her husband did not relieve that embarrassment from his own well-filled purse. But she has made no inquiry, and her husband has given no sign of the secret that has only become more burdensome to him since he imparted it to the friend who is using it as a means of extortion; yet so cunningly does he work, that his victim does not suspect his motive, but only takes pleasure in relieving the temporary financial distress of his confidant and friend.

Now that he has found some one to talk with, the younger man holds many conversations with Norcross on the subject nearest his heart, appearing to find relief in this way. Once he expressed a desire to visit the clairvoyant again, but was dissuaded from doing so by Norcross, who in spite of his professed skepticism, was determined that Sprague should not listen to any more revelations from the lips of the blind seeress.

CHAPTER III.

SPIRITUAL WORK.

IN the pure, sweet atmosphere of a truly spiritual life, Myra Grey gained the instruction and development of mind and heart that made her a creature loved and respected by all who knew her. The hold of the blind clairvoyant upon physical life seemed to be a slight one. Her fragile form, delicate tastes and dainty manners seemed to be adapted to the conditions of a higher state than earth affords; and yet we are taught that, by the developments of time, there will come an age of advancement to mankind, when the subtler, more refined forces of spirituality will so work upon the heart and intellect, as to make the existence of such a pure-minded, intelligent and lovely life as this sightless girl lived, the rule, and not the exception.

From day to day she wrought out her mission to earth, denying none who came to her seeking knowledge of unseen things, as long as strength and spiritual sight remained. And the hours when the inner visions came not — because of exhaustion to spirit and body by the heavy draughts made upon her vitality by her visitors — she passed in devising ways and means by which the lowly and afflicted in the great city around her might be fed and clothed, and comforted, through the agency of her benevolent aunt and herself.

Owing to her wondrous gifts, as well as to the beauty of her character and the charm of her person, Myra

would have been sought after by society, and courted and *fêted* by that capricious dame, — but from the first, the elder Miss Grey let it distinctly be known that her charge could not be taken up in any such manner. The sensitive girl would have been as out of place in the glare and crush of fashionable life, as a rare and delicate exotic would be in the blaze and scorching heat of a burning desert.

From the hour when to the unhappy blind girl came the first vision from angelic life, turning all her woe and rebellion to a sense of peace and gladness, she had lived under the influence and counsel of spiritual attendants. Paying the strictest obedience to their behests, and finding the kindest of coöperators and guides on the mortal side in her aunt, Myra found her medial gifts constantly unfolding, and herself gaining power to bring the utmost of spiritual advice and satisfaction to those who sought her presence.

All who came did not receive just that which they desired. One, seeking the clairvoyant from curiosity, would be given such a lesson of the true dignity of spiritual life, and its relations to earth, as to go away with new ideas to reflect upon. Another, wishing to consult the seeress for purposes of financial gain, would receive such a rebuke, coupled with evidences of the girl's clear sight into the selfish, unprincipled heart, as to retire abashed. Yet all were benefited who came, even though they found not what they sought; for the searching reproof, or the needed lesson, sowed the seed that in future time would unfold a fruitage. Those who came in sadness, or with lonely hearts, were comforted by the glimpses of heavenly life, and by tidings

of the spirit friends the seeress brought to them. The heavily laden dropped their burdens at her feet, the physically sick gained strength, and the unfortunate life felt comforted in her presence. There were times without number when those who suffered through lack of employment, or by material reverses, were aided by her revealments to better their condition. The needy were welcomed by her spirit guides, and advised for their good; but as we have said, the purely selfish were censured, and warned of their unlovely condition.

It had been a day of trial to the clairvoyant; for hours she had responded to the calls made upon her, until it seemed almost as if brain and body could stand no more. The clear March sunshine of the early afternoon streamed into the dainty apartment, — always so peaceful and sweet that it brought a sensation of rest to all who entered it, save to the hardened, selfish individual, who found no congeniality here, but only shivered in its atmosphere — falling obliquely upon a young woman, in a worn shawl and modest brown bonnet, seated just opposite the seeress, whose sightless orbs were fixed upon the floor. The stranger had an appearance of refinement, that the shabby clothing could not conceal, but there was a look of care in the gray eyes, and an expression of pain upon the pale face.

Suddenly into the eyes of the blind girl there flashed a glow, a radiant light, as though the beauty of heaven itself was revealed to her vision, and starting up with outstretched hands, she placed them around the form of her visitor in a tender clasp, as she murmured: "Helen, Helen, your mother is here, I feel her pres-

ence, as she longs to embrace her child. She was called by the same name on earth that you bear, Helen Long. When you were a tiny child, your mother died, but she did not leave you. All your life has been attended by her guardianship. You have been lonely and sad, and in need of comfort; but a loving mother has never forsaken you. Let me tell you what she shows to me.

"I see a young girl, yourself, seated in a small back room. It is scantily furnished, but is neat and pleasant, for the sun streams into it upon a little cage at the window, in which a tiny bird flutters. You are resting your head upon your hand, as if in thought. You are sad, for you have been ill, and without employment. A sound disturbs your meditations, and you start up to find that the restless little creature has dropped dead in its cage. You weep over the lifeless bird, and moan — 'Must everything I love perish?' Now, as your mother stands by your side clasping you closely in her arms, I see a tiny bird alight on your shoulder, and oh, how he sings! glad of his release, and proud of his coming to you."

The visitor listened with amazement to the words thus poured into her ear by the strange woman who had minutely described a scene that had passed only the day before. Heart-sick, friendless, and alone, Helen Long had that afternoon forsaken her humble lodging in search of fresh air. In passing the clairvoyant's house, the modest sign upon the door attracted her attention, and obeying some irresistible impulse she rang the bell and entered.

"You were brought here, unknown to yourself," con-

tinued the medium. "You are in need of assistance; you are delicate in health; the close and dusty atmosphere of the shop in which you last worked affected your lungs and made you ill. You must not return to it; you must have fresh air, pleasant surroundings, and time in which to grow strong. Your mother tells me this."

"Oh, what shall I do?" burst from the lips of the stranger. "It is all as you say; but if my mother is here she must know that unless I go back to the shop I shall starve!"

"Hush, dear child, all is planned wisely for you. Let me convince you that your mother speaks. I have told you her name. She was left a widow when you were a babe. She lavished all her love and care upon you. You missed her sadly when she died, and never ceased to mourn for her. She left a box of papers, which you still have in an old brown trunk under your bed. Among those papers is an old deed — relating to a piece of land in the village of her birth. She wishes you to take that paper to a good lawyer, and place it in his hands. This you cannot do now, but will in time. It will prove valuable to you. Your mother holds up an old-fashioned watch that was hers; it also is in the brown trunk. You have kept it always, but thought to-day of disposing of it. It will bring you but little; you had better keep it, as it will be useful some day."

"All that you say is true; I believe my dear mother is here; will she not advise her child?"

"Yes. There are other good spirits present; I see my own sainted mother, and beside her is little Pearl, my sister. Now *she* speaks and says, 'We have brought

this girl here, for she is good and true, and needs a friend. She has powers that can be developed; she will make a fine medium. *Take her into your home,* and we will unfold her powers. She can sew nicely, and will help aunt Carrie with her work.' How strange this all is; but I never disobey the request of my loved ones. Would you care to come here for awhile?"

"I—I hardly know—" faltered the visitor. "It is all so sudden—you do not know me, and I—I—" she paused and hesitated.

"You mean I am a stranger to you also,—yes, it is true, and this is very unexpected to me. Auntie and I have lived so long alone that it will seem strange to add to our household. But the angels must be wise in what they propose for us. We shall both need time to consider the subject. Come to me in a day or two, if you decide to trust me—"

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, "it is *you* who must do the trusting. I am unknown, and to offer to take me into your home is very magnanimous on your part. I have never heard anything but good of you and your work, but you have heard absolutely nothing of me before."

"No, but my protectors know and indorse you, and they never deceive me; therefore if you will come to me, I shall give you my confidence."

The conversation was soon interrupted by a caller who held an appointment for that hour, and Helen Long withdrew, to think over the strange events that had come into her life.

The result of the interview we have described was,

that the end of the week found Miss Long established at the home of the Greys, and in a few days she fell into a niche in that household, that seemed to have been especially prepared for her. Skillful with her needle, she speedily evinced her willingness to take charge of the wardrobe of her blind benefactress, a task that relieved the elder Miss Grey of much anxiety. A clear and intelligent reader, and possessed of a musical voice, the new-comer soon found opportunities of conveying pleasure to her companions by reading to them from their favorite authors in the moments of leisure that were theirs.

In the atmosphere of her new home Helen Long gained health and strength of mind and body. The removal of anxious care from her life lifted the burden of disease from her frame, and in the peaceful presence of the clairvoyant, she found the nervous excitement that had racked her brain and irritated her lungs slipping away from her. As health rounded out the faded cheek and brightened the eye of the girl, she seemed possessed of a new magnetism, a power that passed from her hand to the weary head of the clairvoyant, when unusual labor had exhausted the delicate frame — imparting life, stimulation, and strength to the sensitive, who otherwise must have suffered from the tax upon her vital system.

In a little while there came signs of mediumistic qualities in the organism of Helen. She had grown speedily into the knowledge of spirit presence and guidance. From her first visit to Miss Grey it had become a conviction with her, and now she herself became the recipient of personal ministrations from the unseen world.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

GRADUALLY the lives of our friends grew into oneness of thought and purpose. Each of the little household seemed imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice for the others, and of blessing for the world. An atmosphere of peace hovered over the dainty home that was made a fitting abiding-place for ministering angels in their mission to earth by the presence of pure hearts with unselfish motives, and by the graceful surroundings and appointments, kept ever neat and beautiful by the willing hands of its inmates.

It was the pleasure of the blind seeress to dress always in robes of spotless white from May to October; and in the cooler months to have her garments fashioned of some soft, fleecy material of delicate hue; to have her apartments the picture of purity and simplicity; softened by the contrasting colors of pale gold and white in summer, and brightened by warmer, richer shades in winter. Delicate flowers always shed their sweet perfume around her; and the fair creature seemed more like a being of heaven than of earth, as she moved along the tiny halls made beautiful by the hand of love.

"Nothing earth can offer is too lovely for our angel friends," she often said to her companions. "We invite them to leave their bright homes in the higher life, where all things are radiant with the glory of the

spheres, to visit us in our poor abodes. What a miserable reception we would give them, did they find our rooms untidy and ourselves unclean. How their refined natures accustomed to the culture and beauty of heavenly life must sicken, to be called down to homes where carelessness abounds and where the laws of bodily and spiritual purity are disregarded. Nothing we can give them can equal the grandeur of the surroundings, or the peace of their associations on high. I always feel as if I must prepare for their coming, as I would if I were called upon to entertain the most exalted guest on earth. I want my house swept and garnished and made the embodiment of neatness and attractiveness. I want flowers and pretty pictures to greet the eye of my visitors. I want clear, sweet air to refresh them. Why, don't you know that stifling air, and stale odors, even if faintly perceptible to mortals, are obnoxious to the delicate senses of pure spirits? Every day, when I prepare to meet my spirit guides, I feel that as clean as I *can* be within or without, will not be any too fair for their inspection or their approval; so I am particular about my bath. I partake of simple, nourishing food, warm milk, grain, fruits, a little game, fish, or a few oysters; and I like my garments to be daily fresh and sweet: That for the body, — and for the mind, pleasant thoughts. Oh! if we could only always be good and wise in heart, would not the angels encamp around us? How I wish all mediums could understand that the more loving and harmonious and *holy* we make our lives, the more attractive — by simple methods, and painstaking efforts, I mean, not by display or expensive adornments — we

make our surroundings, the nearer the blessed angels can come to us.

As the weeks merged into months a new power entered the home. Occasionally at eventide as our friends sat in the gloaming, each one quietly resting after the duties of the day, a faint, delicate mist, clear, and soft as moonlight, would seem to emanate from the form of Helen Long, and gradually drifting together, these vaporous emanations would appear to condense and shapen until they assumed the proportions and figure of a human being. For a long time this mysterious figure presented no distinct features, by which it could be recognized. The general shape and appearance of a person would be visible in the cloud of mist, but that was all. Clear and beautiful, self-luminous, transparent, so that the wall behind it was seen by looking at the form — this appearance seemed to be clothed in shining raiment of the finest lace; and yet once, when Helen Long, who was perfectly conscious of what was transpiring in her presence, stretched out her hand to lightly grasp the draperies floating around the figure, they melted in her clasp like a fall of snow, and the entire form dissipated into nothingness. For a second Helen was enveloped in a very attenuated mist which she seemed to absorb into herself, and then the atmosphere cleared leaving no trace of the witching influence that had a moment before surrounded them.

Here was a new study for our friends. This wonderful manifestation, revealing itself in their midst, brought to them a new conception of the power of the spirit. Through the agency of the blind clairvoyant, the spirit guides of the little family instructed them how to pro-

ceed in the development of this new mediumship. Religiously did they obey the commands laid upon them, and week after week the unfoldment went on which was to bring such rich blessing in its growth.

Only once in ten days did the manifestation occur of which we write, for the invisible guides declared that not oftener must the vital system of their medium—who in this instance we have seen was Helen Long—be taxed. They averred that in the collection and concentration of those elements necessary for the preparation of that form they attempted to produce, the nervous forces of the medium were largely drained, and that a too frequent draft upon them would result in disaster to their instrument. But on the contrary, by judiciously utilizing the surplus energy and magnetic emanations of the girl, the spiritual operators could not only in time succeed in presenting to mortals a representation of the loved ones who had passed from earth, thus proving the immortality of the intelligent, affectionate spirit, and demonstrating the power of the soul over matter, but they could also bring to their medium new life and animation, with a restful, happy condition of mind and body.

The unseen teachers taught their pupils wise lessons concerning mediumship, its laws, methods and operations, to all of which they listened with patience and interest. They had no desire to hasten results, but were content to await developments, and to conscientiously obey the dictates of their spirit friends. They were told that while the independent body was in progress of formation, the medium would feel a gradual weakening of her vital powers, a sense of loss occasioned

by the withdrawal of certain elements from her system ; but that all she had to do was to keep quiet and at ease, as, when the form should disappear, all the elements necessary for her sustenance would return to her, and only such surplus forces as she did not require would be dissipated in the atmosphere through the process of evaporation. They were also told that cords of light—composed of atoms so fine and attenuated as to be invisible to the natural eye—held the spiritual form or apparition to that of the medium ; and if, by any chance these should be severed, much injury might result, as the elements then might remain in the atmosphere and not so readily return to their source ; the cords acting as conducting channels for the minute particles of matter that the medium had temporarily loaned for the appearance.

Myra Grey could not behold the form as it appeared to her aunt and Helen ; but if her blindness prevented the sight of this strangely beautiful apparition, as it appeared externally, her clairvoyant vision beheld such scenes of surpassing interest as to more than compensate her for what she had missed. Quietly she watched the spirit workers who were busy with this operation. Not one, but many seemed engaged. Men, and women too, collecting atoms, sending their magnetisms over the little company of mortals, magnetizing the room and the house,—all directed by one earnest and grand spirit, whose knowledge of the forces of nature and the laws of the universe must have been large, so well and intelligently did he conduct his pupils to a successful end.

Not one low-minded or repulsive spirit did Myra discern in this assembly ; not one whom she could call

earth-bound or in any way diseased. All were gentle, courteous, filled with harmony; and with the light of exaltation—as though they were denizens of high places—upon their features. She had sometimes heard that demonstrations of a physical character made by unseen spirits to attract the attention of mortals were produced by impure, or at least by undeveloped, robust spirits, whose natures were more of the earth, earthy, than of the spirit, spiritual. The scenes and people she beheld now did not confirm that statement; and the clairvoyant concluded that if we try to make our hearts and homes agreeable to pure angels, if we seek the development of mediumistic gifts for unselfish purposes, if we invoke the presence of the good and wise from Beyond, with the earnest desire to profit by their teachings and their example, we shall not be afflicted by the presence or the machinations of mischievous or unholy spirits: for such aspirations and motives would reflect themselves in an aura of light emanating from our lives, which would attract the good and true, and in the brightness of which the carnal-minded could not remain.

Slowly the work went on, unknown to the world, but faithfully cherished and followed by our friends. Meanwhile the blind clairvoyant pursued her daily labors, bringing comfort and peace, or instruction and new truths, to those who sought her services.

One day as the burning heat of an August noon beat upon her head, a poor child came to the door of the little cottage. Her sweet face and pathetic eyes pleaded for her, as she begged a sitting with the kind clairvoyant of whom she had heard. "I have no money,"

she explained, "but I will pay the lady with this," and she held out a dainty bracelet of fine gold. "It is all I have. I lost my best friend recently, and I am alone."

The elder Miss Grey felt the tears springing to her eyes as she listened. "Put up your jewel, child," she said, kindly; "the lady does not wish it. She will sit for you, and if possible tell you something of your loss."

The girl, a wee creature who had perhaps seen sixteen summers, looked grateful as she passed into the presence of the lady she desired to see. It might have been fifteen minutes before the silence was broken by the voice of the clairvoyant, when she said :

"Oh! it is sad, very sad, child; you come here in a desperate mood. You have been wronged and deserted. In your despair you told your mother all. She pitied and loved you, while she mourned over your folly. Your mother promised to care for you in your hour of trial when it came. She was an active woman, who earned her bread and yours. But she suddenly sickened and died. You are alone and without money. You are ashamed to tell any one of your trouble. You have left the town, five miles distant, where your mother lived, and wandered here. You have a bracelet that *he* gave you; you wish to dispose of it. It is all you have. You have thought of suicide, and are contemplating it now.

"You are not friendless and alone;" continued the seeress. "Angels watch over you; they have brought you here to-day. You knew not why you were impelled to come, but bright ones were guiding your steps. Your mother is here. She calls you her little Leila, and begs

you not to commit such a sin against yourself and your unborn child. She tells me that you have not known the full name of your betrayer. To you he was simply John Owen; to the world he is Owen Norcross. Your wrongs shall yet be righted, and you will stand before the world an honest woman."

The stranger listened in astonishment. She was now weeping softly to herself, gazing at the speaker in a half-breathless way, as if she were a visitant from an unseen world.

"My own blessed mother stands before me" — went on the clairvoyant, the mystic light deepening in her eyes. "*She* bids me send you to an old friend of hers, and a lifelong friend of my own. She says that Mrs. Carter will care for you in the hour of trial. A better day is dawning for you, my poor child."

The tone of tender compassion went to the heart of the girl, who, sinking on her knees, buried her face in the soft cushions of a chair and sobbed convulsively. The light faded from Myra's eyes, and placing her hand softly upon the bowed head, she gently said: "Tell me all about it; it will do you good."

Won by the sympathy of that voice, the poor penitent poured forth her tale of woe to the pitying heart that had taken her in.

It was, as the seeress had said, a sad, sad story. A young and lovely child, ignorant of the world's ways, innocent of any thought of wrong, had at the age of fifteen succumbed to the wily blandishments and the psychological power of a matured man of the world. Without her mother's knowledge — for that more experienced woman had taken a strong dislike to the man —

Leila White had continued to meet him, and at last to consent to an elopement with the man. They had gone to a city twenty miles away, and passed through the form of a marriage ceremony. For three weeks they remained at a quiet hotel, seldom venturing out of doors, and then only at nightfall—and then the dream was over. Weary of his new love, her childishness, and her ignorance of the world, "John Owen" cruelly told her that she was free to return to her mother; that she held no claim upon him; that the marriage ceremony was "only a pleasant little fiction" performed by a friend of his, and was wholly illegal.

Stunned and outraged by the story, poor Leila fled from the presence of the heartless man, finding her way back to the poor distracted mother who mourned her loss. She was taken in and pardoned, but in a little while it became apparent that she could not much longer hide her shame from the world. Just at this critical time the faithful mother sickened and died, leaving her penniless child to the mercies of the world.

Two weeks had passed since her parent's death, and Leila, maddened by her sense of loss, and of shame, had resolved on following her mother to the other world. Impelled by some resistless force she had wandered forth, a small bundle containing all her worldly possessions in hand, to take the life which had grown so hateful to her.

The blind seeress listened attentively, encouraging the faltering tones of the girl by the gentle pressure of her hand. This was an urgent case, and Myra did not hesitate. Ringing for her aunt, she hastily confided the story to that lady, who immediately prepared to accom-

pany the stranger to benevolent Mrs. Carter—an elderly lady, widely known as a skillful nurse—who would care for the girl in her extremity, as a mother cares for her child. A sum of money sufficient for present needs was inclosed in an envelope for the nurse, and our friends felt that for a time, at least, the tortured wayfarer would find a home and the needed care.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW MOVE.

As the brilliant August noons burned and glowed, bearing their summer tide of heat and weariness to the toiling millions who knew no hours for recreation and repose; or bringing only pleasure and gayety to the notaries of folly and fashion, who, unmindful of the needs and sorrows of their unfortunate fellow-creatures, frittered away the golden hours at seaside resort, or country retreat, Charles Sprague found the burden of his life pressing heavily upon him.

He had established his family in an elegant out-of-town villa for the summer, and loosening his hold somewhat upon the cares of business, had thought to surrender himself to the charms of nature, and to the solitude of country life. But here the restlessness grew upon his spirit; with leisure for thought, and time for reflection, the memory of his past heartlessness and cruelty toward a fair young creature, whose only fault had been in loving him too well—a folly that should have made her doubly dear to him—the pangs of remorse tugged at his heart-strings and would not be appeased.

Owen Norcross, too, had fastened himself so heavily upon the man's generosity as to be felt at times a burden, yet, feeling the necessity of some confidant, Charles could not throw him off, especially as this dark-browed man held the secret of his life. Norcross had

been invited to spend the summer at the villa, with the liberty of coming and going as he pleased; and the man had taken up his quarters here, spending two or three days and nights out of each week, however, among his own private associates in town,—of which associates and their life Charles Sprague and his wife knew but very little.

Clara Sprague watched the knitting brow and restless demeanor of her husband with uneasiness. She was certain that some trouble preyed upon his mind, but she was too sensitive and high-spirited to proffer the sympathy he had not asked for; and he, deceived by the quiet appearance of his wife, held aloof from her side, believing that she had no concern for his happiness, and feeling that he was all unworthy of even her respect. At first, Mrs. Sprague conjectured that it must be some financial worryment that assailed her husband; but as she continued to narrowly observe his conduct, and noticed that he always cheerfully drew upon his exchequer to any large amount when occasion demanded, she became convinced that it was not from any monetary embarrassment that he suffered.

Gradually a new suspicion crept into the heart of the lady, robbing her of comfort by day and peace by night. Could it be that her husband chafed beneath the family ties that bound him? He was so noble and upright in all his dealings, he could not possibly wish to rend these chains. Yet her proud heart had learned in the early hours of wedlock that the attentions bestowed upon her by the man she had married did not spring from the warm, glowing ardor of a lover, but were tinged by a coolness and indifference that convinced

his bride that to him she was not the dearest and the most prized. The consciousness of this had embittered the subsequent life of the woman, but it had also wrought a wondrous charm in her nature, sweetening and refining by its sorrow the heart that hitherto might have been a little too unconscious of the pure significance of being. Now the fear was awakened that the chains of matrimony galled her husband. Not that she suspected him of any preference for another. He was the soul of honor, and no other woman could smile him away from his allegiance to his wife. Yet Clara believed that there must have been in him an early attachment for some past love, and that this affection still held him by its subtle claims. Once, in the early spring, she had surprised Charles suddenly; he was holding a quaint, old-fashioned locket in his hand, the lids of which were apart, and she distinctly saw her husband press them to his lips, as she caught a glimpse of the pictured face of a young woman on one side of the locket, and of a tress of yellow hair upon the other. As she stood beside him, he suddenly thrust the treasure into his breast, and began to busy himself with some documents upon the table before him.

The circumstance did not escape the memory of Clara Sprague, and later in the summer, when the quiet and loveliness of their country-seat failed to woo her husband from his uneasy condition, she dwelt upon it with a growing pain at her heart and speculation in her thoughts.

In his secret journal, clasped by a tiny golden lock, Charles kept the record of his life, and from one passage penned upon its pages one glorious summer day,

we may read the record of those turbulent thoughts and maddening emotions that surged throughout his being: "It has been a day of matchless splendor out-of-doors. All creation seems to throb and burn with joy and animation. As I passed through the grounds, the scarlet blossoms of the geraniums and the brilliant cups of the lilies cast a blaze of glory at my feet. The golden sun streamed down upon me, its scorching rays tempered into mildness by the placid summer breeze. The low hum of an occasional blue-coated insect, and the twitter of sweet-throated birds in the tree-tops made music on the air, while over all the azure expanse of heaven seemed to spread a canopy of blessing. But what of benediction, what of peace was there in the scene for me! For me, so racked by pain and contrition, that a flame of fire seems to scorch my very heart! O God! Where shall I find relief from the burning pain! Agnes! Agnes! you are frightfully avenged. In the quiet hours of night I can see your tears; I can hear the prayers you must have offered for deliverance from your doom. You were wronged and I was pitiless — but today I am doomed to remorseful contemplation. Yours is to me a sacred memory, — and yet there is another whom I love with all the fervor of a lover's heart. Clara, my wife, so dear, so dear to me! And yet I so loathe myself that I dare not touch her hand in love, nor would she respond in kind. Oh, to be freed from this conflict! To be at rest! Could I believe it not an unpardonable sin, I would this night lie down in death; I would voluntarily sever the chains that bind me to earth, and seek oblivion in the grave. But the thought is that of an assassin, and I dare not encourage it."

As August waned, a new source of anxiety came to the man. A dispatch from the home of his unacknowledged daughter Olive told of the death of the old clergyman with whom she lived, and the stricken condition of his wife, who could not long survive him. He must come at once and prepare a new home for his "ward," now a young girl in her fourteenth year.

What could be done? So harassed was he by the loss of sleep, and the nervous excitement that had attended him for months, the hitherto energetic Charles Sprague seemed incapable of urgent action or of concentrated thought, and he determined to consult his friend in this emergency.

Here was the opportunity Owen Norcross sought. As yet he had been kept in ignorance of the home of Olive Clarke, but now he was determined to learn its secret; and so with the appearance of genuine solicitude to serve his benefactor, he urged upon him the necessity of intrusting the delicate business to some cautious and confidential friend — namely himself, Owen Norcross.

"Let me go for the girl," he earnestly said. "I will find a good home and pleasant surroundings for her, until you can make arrangements to place her in some boarding-school or other retreat. I will represent myself to her and her friends in whatever guise you prefer; as your agent, your lawyer, your relative — or even as her father, if you think best. I will explain all things to their satisfaction, and finish up the business in such a manner as the most discreet person can do. In short, I will make it easy for you, if you will give me *carte blanche* to go ahead."

The result of this conference was that Owen Norcross secured his ends ; and on the day following, that diplomat found himself *en route* for Richmond, the distant country home of Olive Clarke.

He found the parsonage a house of mourning. The remains of its late master had been laid away, amid the lamentations of his people. His lifelong companion was stricken with paralysis, and was about to be removed to the home of a relative who could give her needed care. Olive, a slight, *petite* creature, rather under-sized for her years, with large, blue eyes and fluffy yellow hair, met him with a tear-stained face. She was a gentle, timid girl, who listened to the plausible tale of this stranger with a mingled feeling of shrinking and wonderment. Norcross represented himself as Owen Clarke, the *father* whom the child had never known, thus transcending the liberty that his friend Sprague had given him. "I have been absent from this country many years, my dear child, and have only recently returned to my native land. The loss of your idolized mother drove me nearly frantic, and finding that I could gain no distraction from my thoughts amidst my old surroundings, I resolved to seek relief in foreign lands. I left my motherless child to the careful guardianship of my relative, Charles Sprague, whom you have known. I bring from him a letter of introduction to your friends, which you shall see. I have had the most encouraging reports of your progress in study, and of your physical growth. I am prepared to love and care for my child as a father should."

The child listened with downcast eyes. No feeling of love crept into her heart for this new-found relative

she instinctively shrank from his touch, but she made no sign of her aversion. The story repeated to the stricken household by the new-comer, together with the introductory letters which he brought, gave him entrance into the confidence of its members, and during the day or two of his stay, he succeeded only in deepening the favorable impression he had made upon all but the girl he had come to claim.

The farewells spoken by the child to all she had known and loved the greater part of her life were indeed sad, and with a trembling sob the little figure followed her new guardian from the home she had cherished as her own. On the railway train she was very quiet, and her companion, noting the shrinking form and timid countenance, in which experience and discipline had not yet deepened the lines of firmness and decision, knew that he need apprehend no rebellion from her. There was a grace of carriage, and a gentle dignity about the little lady, that, in spite of her air of diffidence, bespoke her a creature of culture and refinement. The finely shaped head, crowned by its floss of golden hair; the oval countenance, with its pure red and white complexion; the lustrous blue eyes, fringed by long tawny lashes; the cherry lips and baby chin — all made up a picture of sweetness fair to look upon.

A whirr and whiz of several hours brought the travelers to a railroad station, where they alighted; and taking a carriage they were driven to a small brick house in a quiet part of this strange town. Here Olive was ushered into a small but pleasantly furnished parlor, where she received welcome from a rather fleshy

but comely woman, whom her reputed father presented to the child as his housekeeper, Mrs. Banks.

"You received my letter?" he said significantly to the woman as he met her, who replied:—

"Oh yes, and I understand it all. Miss Olive's room is ready, and I think she will like it. It is late, and after tea she must retire, as she is tired. We will try to make a pleasant home for her."

The tone and the smile found their way to the heart of the forlorn waif, and a grateful expression flashed into the gray orbs that turned upon the strange lady who had spoken so cheerfully.

CHAPTER VI.

OLIVE'S NEW HOME.

THE room assigned to Olive as her own proved to be a pleasant apartment, quite daintily furnished with a heavy India matting upon the floor; snowy draperies at the windows, looped back by ribbons of pale blue; willow chairs and stands ornamented with silken bows; a shining brass bedstead, the spotless pillows and counterpane of which seemed to invite the weary limbs of the girl to repose; and a few pretty pictures upon the tinted walls. Although in the rear of the house, this room looked out upon a little garden, where just now the late summer flowers nodded gaily, and the branches of a couple of fruit trees cast a pleasant shade. The prospect from her windows was pleasing to the child, as on the morning after her arrival she leaned from the casement to inhale the odor of the flowers, and to catch the gentle breeze that floated around her. But a sense of loneliness tugged at her heart. A feeling of homesickness — that most depressing of all sensations — crept upon her, and in spite of herself the tears started to her eyes as she gazed upon her new surroundings.

At breakfast Olive was very quiet, scarcely tasting the hot, buttered rolls and delicious steak that her reputed father pressed upon her. Mrs. Banks kept no servant, but prided herself upon her own skill in house-keeping, and that lady had this morning taken unusual pains with the early meal, wishing to tempt the appetite

of the young arrival who might prove to be her guest for an indefinite time. But the girl could not eat, and after making a few futile attempts she excused herself from the room with the plea that she wished to unpack her trunk, and arrange her little effects in her new room.

While she was thus engaged, the man and woman below discussed the charge they had assumed.

"She seems to be a gentle creature, John," said Mrs. Banks, as the door closed upon Olive's retreating figure; "rather shy and timid, but well-bred and graceful. Where did you find her? What do you intend to do with her? And why have you assumed the paternal relationship toward her?"

"What a woman you are for asking questions, Kitty," replied the man, leaning back in his chair. "But there! I will tell you. The girl is really the daughter of an old friend of mine. For some reason best known to himself, he does not wish to acknowledge her before the world. The people with whom she has lived for years had to give her up, and so her father hired me to look after her. She is timid and pliable. We can do with her as we please. She believes I am her father, and that I have only recently returned from abroad. If we work our cards right she will prove a regular gold mine to us. To tell you the truth, Kit, there is a stain upon her birth. Her father is a rich man, and I mean to work him for all this secret is worth."

"I dare say," drily responded Mrs. Banks; "but I hardly know what we can do with the girl here. This is no fit place for her. Of course I can make her comfortable, as far as her bodily wants are concerned; but John, what about the men who frequent the back parlor

when you are at home? You would not care to have them know of her presence in the house, nor would you wish *your* 'daughter' to learn that her new-found 'father' is the proprietor of a gaming table, and that he admits gamblers into his house?"

"There is no necessity for her to know these things, Kitty. My friends do not come until a late hour. Olive has always lived a simple life, and is accustomed to retiring early. She need never meet these men, nor need they know of her presence. I shall remain at home for at least a couple of weeks, during which I propose to make myself agreeable to the child. We shall have ample time to discuss her prospects; and our plans must develop as we become acquainted with her disposition. I shall want you to look over her wardrobe, and see if she is well supplied with what she needs. I mean to treat the girl well, and to win her confidence, if I can."

Mrs. Banks eyed her companion sharply for a moment. Evidently his fertile brain held some scheme which she could not fathom. "I shall find it out in time," she thought, as she quietly answered his last remark. The woman arose, and passed from the room, going directly to Olive's chamber. She found the girl kneeling, in a spasm of tears, over the open trunk which contained her stock of wearing apparel, together with her cherished books and a few trinkets.

With a touch of sympathy, Mrs. Banks drew the tearful face of the forlorn child to her breast, and smoothed the tangled hair from the heated brow. "There! there, child!" she said in a soothing tone. "Don't fret so. You will get used to the change in a little while. You

must not feel that you are alone, for I am going to be your friend. I am sure we shall get along nicely together, and you will be as happy here as you were in your old home."

The girl continued to sob, but as the kindly tones fell upon her ear the weeping gradually ceased, and she leaned trustfully upon the ample bosom of the kindly heart that sustained her. Mrs. Banks had known a hard experience. Much of misfortune and shame had crept into her experience. She had come to look lightly upon the sins and vices of mankind, and she had not been without guile in her own life. Even now she stood in the shadow. Her home was the resort of gamblers, and the reputed master of the house — that man whom she had just left in the breakfast-room — sustained only the relationship of lover toward this woman who should have been his wife. But with all her faults, Mrs. Banks had noble traits of character. She was generous, and was filled with pity for the sad and unfortunate. Hers was a kindly nature, one that could not inflict pain upon any one, but which rather sought to bestow gladness and joy upon all. There was much to attract one in the appearance of this woman. She was comely, and the generous smile with which she gazed at one lighted up her countenance, and deepened the lustre of her bronze brown eyes. Children were always friendly with Mrs. Banks, and, having none of her own, she lavished the love of her heart upon the offspring of others, feeling well repaid by the innocent trust which they placed in her. Was it any wonder that the young girl, in her weakness, turned to this one heart that of all the world offered her sympathy and kindly affection? Whatever

this woman might be in character, she was certainly sincere, and Olive, feeling the genuine interest displayed toward her, responded with a grateful heart.

As the sobs of the girl ceased, Mrs. Banks drew from her a recital of her sorrows and forebodings. The story was a simple one, and soon told. At its close the woman again soothed the timid creature with consoling words, and rising, proceeded to unpack the neglected trunk, and to place its contents in convenient receptacles. "I see you have a well preserved and tasty wardrobe," she said in a brisk, cheery tone. "We will look it over later, and remodel whatever is in need of repair. Now I have my household duties to attend to, and I must leave you. Or, if you like"—noticing the wistful look of the child—"you may go with me down stairs. I should like your company while I am at work."

Olive accepted the invitation gladly. Once in the dining-room, which led out of the neatest and cosiest of kitchens, the girl offered help in clearing the table, and in a few minutes she was busy, performing with neatness and dispatch the humble duties that she attempted, and finding in her tasks a relief from the wearing sorrow that preyed upon her heart.

The girl avoided "Owen Clarke"—as her pretended father called himself—as much as possible, but several times that day she found herself brought face to face with him, and obliged to listen to his words of conciliation and affected interest. She did not doubt the story he told of his relationship to herself; but, try as she would, she could *not* believe in him. There was something false and insincere about this swarthy man, that repelled the sensitive creature, and further acquaintance

with him only deepened the feeling of aversion that had taken possession of her when she first came in contact with him.

As the days passed, Olive found deeper companionship with Mrs. Banks. It now became a part of her regular duty to assist that lady in her household tasks, and as she had not been reared in ignorance of domestic labors, the girl proved a ready assistant to the busy woman whose orderly household was her pride. Mrs. Banks knew from her own experience that idle hands make weary hearts, and that the very best panacea for *ennui*, or heart-sickness, is labor for mind and body. It was therefore more out of consideration for the peace of mind of her young companion, than any desire to profit by her assistance, that she so readily found something for her to do, when time threatened to hang heavily upon her hands.

"The widow," as she was called by her neighbors, bore an excellent reputation as far as she was known. She made but few acquaintances, and seldom received or paid calls in town. She was looked upon by the neighbors as an exclusive person, who kept house for her brother or cousin — the gentleman who spent a good part of his time away from town, and who had some business interests or other in Parkeville, a city twenty miles or more away.

During the two weeks that followed Olive's arrival no one called, neither did Mrs. Banks visit any one. The house was quiet by day, but sometimes at night the little lady thought she heard the sound of many voices speaking in muffled tones, and wondered as she lay in her bed and tried to listen, if any strangers could

be in the house. One night, about ten days after her advent, Olive awoke from a sound sleep of several hours. Her window was open to admit the soft September air, and the light of the early moon streamed in silver bars across the floor. As she lay gazing out into the loveliness of the night, the sound of suppressed voices stole upon her ear. Rising and leaning her head upon her elbow, she strained her ears to catch the murmur as it rose and fell. Yes, surely there were strangers in the house. Now the sounds grew louder. There was a mingling of voices. Oaths and exclamations filled the air. Frightened at the noise, the girl sprang from her bed and leaned from her open casement. The windows of the room below were closed and shuttered, but gleams of light shone through the spaces of the blinds, and she was sure that the outbreak, which had now died into silence, must have proceeded from that room.

Trembling with nervous excitement, the girl closed and barred her window — despite the warmth of the night — and stepping to her door turned the key in its lock. What induced her to thus imprison herself she could hardly have told. It was not that she really feared intrusion, but rather because the rude shock she had received seemed to unnerve her.

The next morning, before Olive appeared, Mrs. Banks said to the master of the house: "What caused the disturbance last night? You are usually so careful not to have any noise in the house, that I was surprised at what I heard. Olive must have been frightened at it, for I heard her close her window and lock her door. I was about to go to her when she turned the key, but as I heard nothing more I did not."

"It was as well; say nothing to her, unless she mentions it herself; if she does so, make any excuse you please,—tell her it was not late, and I had a few friends in to take a glass of wine with me. Say something of that sort,—that the fellows got a little excited over their cups, and so on; you will know how to fix it. The truth is, Fred Carroll lost heavily. He swore I tricked him at the cards, and he wouldn't stand it. He blustered a little, but I was cool, and he soon wilted. However, I made six hundred by the operation, and here is a part of it for you"—and he handed his companion a one hundred dollar bill as he spoke.

Olive was too timid to refer to the fright of the previous night, and so nothing was said concerning it when she appeared. The girl was pale and weary-looking, but she brightened visibly on learning that her "father" was going away in a day or two, to be absent for some weeks,—a fact which caused that worthy gentleman to gnaw his under lip with vexation.

True to his word, Owen Norcross—as he is known to our readers—departed at the time mentioned, ostensibly to attend to important business, but in reality to pursue his nefarious work in the city of Parkeville. He had held no communication with Charles Sprague since he had started on his journey to Richmond in search of Olive Clarke, except to dispatch a cautiously worded note to Sprague, to the effect that the work was accomplished. He knew he should find Charles in an anxious frame of mind, but this did not disturb the schemer, nor in any way affect his plans.

Arriving at the home of his friend, Norcross sought a private interview with Sprague, during which he

revealed much of what had taken place in regard to the child. "I really thought it best to represent myself as her father," he said in an insinuating tone. "It at once prevented embarrassing questions about you, as well as other annoyances. I know you did not intend it, but really, my dear fellow, it was best; and why should *you* care, if I were willing to assume the responsibility? She is now established in the quiet home of a friend of mine — a woman of good character, and genial appearance — and is already as happy as she can be. You need be in no hurry to change her quarters, and indeed, if you wish, I can provide Olive with private tutors, and so she need not be placed in a boarding-school at all. Of course, it will take money and a good deal of it. If I were not so deucedly straightened at this time, I wouldn't mention it. But where she is, our world will never hear of her, and Mrs. Sprague can still be kept in total ignorance of the girl's existence."

"That is what must be done. I could not bear to have her existence revealed to my family. Surround the child with every comfort. Make her life a contented and a happy one. Give her books and pictures and competent teachers. Spare no expense in bringing brightness to her lot. She deserves all that, poor thing, for her birthright is denied her. I will cheerfully meet all the bills." Charles Sprague drew a check as he spoke, and filling it out for a large amount, handed it to the man, who placed it in his pocket with the air of one who had done a virtuous deed and deserved a recompense.

CHAPTER VII.

A GLIMPSE INTO HEAVEN.

THE autumn advanced until the October moon hung full and round above a sleeping world, lighting up the clear, crisp atmosphere with a flood of silvery splendor. While the busy throng, bent upon its own pursuits and pleasures, passed to and fro, unmindful of the heart experiences of those it jostled on its way, a season of trial was reaching the lives of our friends in the little cottage home.

For some weeks a perceptible weakness had settled upon the frame of Caroline Grey. The summer had seemed to rob her system of its accustomed tone. A feeling of lassitude crept upon her, from which she could not arouse. Her step grew slow, and there was at times a failing of vocal power when she essayed to speak, that did not escape the loving notice of her niece.

A change of scene and of occupation was advised by the medical attendant who was called, and for a few weeks in the late summer and early autumn our little family sojourned at the seashore where the sound of the soft waves lapping the sands, and the touch of the cool, refreshing, salted air, stimulated and revived the drooping energies of the blind girl and her companion Helen Long. But the change brought but little relief to the one whom they most sought to benefit. "Aunt Carrie" still continued to fade away, and, of late, extreme physical prostration accompanied the attacks

of nervous pain that at times racked her system; convincing the invalid of her loss of vital power, and bringing to her mind the knowledge that her time on earth was wearing to the end. She longed for the quiet and the pleasant surroundings of her peaceful home, and at her request the girls refrained from seeking some other healthful resort, as they had contemplated doing, and returned with the prostrated one to the home she loved.

All that affection could suggest was tried for the relief of the invalid. Not only were the best medical skill and nursing administered, but vital magnetism was applied by a competent and successful healer, under the direction of those wise spirits who had guided our friends so long. But while these attentions lessened the sufferings of Miss Grey, thus enabling her to find relief from that sleeplessness which had afflicted her for weeks, — they did not seem to repair the waste of those nervous forces that was rapidly depriving her system of its vital action.

The invalid herself realized that no earthly skill could save her. The thought of death brought no fear to her heart, for she looked upon its coming as that of a blessed deliverer. She *knew* that beyond the turmoil of earthly experience would be found broad fields and pleasant habitations, and that loving reunion with cherished hearts awaited her spirit just outside the bounds of mortality.

Of a highly sensitive organism, Caroline Grey exercised to a large degree that intuitive faculty — or spiritual *perception* — which, although it belongs to every human being, remains uncultivated and dormant with

many until they have put off the bondage of flesh. This intuitive faculty may properly be called a sixth sense, inasmuch as it enables man to *perceive* those things which the other five senses cannot weigh or handle. By its operation he can grasp in his mental sphere a knowledge of life that nought else can supply. This faculty shows him at once the truth of whatever proposition is brought to his mind, and reveals to his comprehension, without the aid of books or teachers, the meaning, the purpose, and the verity of laws and of lessons that have hitherto been obscured. Spiritual perception, or intuition, is something more than *sight*, as it enables the mind to more than *see*. It opens every avenue of sensation, and through its exercise man can not only see and hear and feel the realities of existence, but he can *know* the truth concerning every mystery and secret of nature, or of the universe. In fine, when this sixth sense of humanity is developed and kept in active operation, mankind will be able to *perceive* and understand on all sides, and through all the channels of being, the lessons, the problems, and the solutions of life.

Such a sense had Caroline Grey. Intuitive, aspirational, spiritual by nature, she seemed to walk in an atmosphere all her own. Through the exercise of her own wise judgment, she had brought her emotional faculties into such subjection, that while they gave forth the sweetness and odor of immortal flowers to all who came under their influence, they never wounded the heart of friend, or left the sting of misunderstanding upon the life they reached, for no thorns were concealed beneath their rich surface.

Living under the direct guidance and inspiration of such angelic spirits as had communicated through the agency of her niece for so many years, the invalid must, of necessity, have developed the grandest portions of her nature. The light of heavenly love shining full into her life called forth responses from its depths, and beneath its rays the pure heart grew strong and serene, filled with the courage of fidelity, and animated by the consciousness of seeking God's truth.

Caroline was herself highly mediumistic, — that is, the inner side of her life was open to the spirit spheres, so that she could come into conscious contact with their inhabitants; but she could neither see, describe, nor talk with individual intelligences of the other world. She could *sense* or perceive their presence, and find a holy comfort in the conviction of it. The mediumistic qualities of this good woman had been utilized by the spirit world. The magnetic forces of her system had not only been applied in developing the clairvoyance of the blind girl, but also had served in preserving the health and stimulating the mental activities of that blessed instrument for spirit communion.

Latterly, the development of Helen Long's mediumship had advanced rather more rapidly than is usual in such phases as she possessed; but it seemed as if the guides were anxious to press forward the work for some important end; and as their wards on earth provided them the finest of conditions, the unfoldment progressed with uncommon regularity. In this operation Miss Grey the elder had lent all her sympathies and her magnetic forces. Sometimes she felt that her vitality had been too vigorously taxed; but she did not com-

plain, for she believed that the grandeur of the work justified the means employed.

But now the end approached. "Aunt Carrie" realized the truth, but Myra, her niece, would not accept it. For the first time in her life the blind girl doubted the statements made by her spirit attendants. She thought they must be mistaken; it was not possible that her aunt could be taken from her. For days her condition of mind was such that her inner vision became closed to the presence of her spirit friends, and to the prospects of the other world. All was dark around the unhappy child. No light penetrated her bewildered senses, and those who came seeking the services of her usually illuminated powers were turned away without the aid they sought.

As she sat beside the couch of her beloved relative one afternoon, her hand resting lightly upon the attenuated one of the invalid, the blind girl felt a thrill pass through her frame, and a strong hand placed upon her head. Presently the voice of her spirit father sounded in her ears, and, aroused by the electric shock so strangely applied, she listened with quickened hearing to the words it spoke: "My daughter, your rebellion is not wise, nor is it just to your aunt. It is unlike the spirit of my child, for it savors of selfishness. Think of the approaching change with calmness. Prepare to meet it, for it is inevitable. Think of the joy, the release, the glorious home that it will bring to your aunt. She has lived her pure, patient, and unselfish life on earth, and the time is at hand when she shall ascend to her reward. My daughter, you will not be left alone to struggle with the trials of earth. A strong

guard is around you ; its protecting care will be your shield. Loving spirits will guide you day and night. To your band will be added one more bright angel in the spirit of aunt Carrie, whose watchful love will never fail. Nor on the mortal side will you lack attendance. You have many friends whose sympathy will uphold you ; while Helen will take the place of your aunt in this little home. Your guides had foreseen this change when Helen was brought to you. They led her hither to help you do a spiritual work. They are developing her medial powers for that end. You and she will be strengthened daily for the experiences of life. Be patient and submissive, trust in heaven, and all will be well."

The tears of the sightless girl were now falling silently upon the wasted hand that lay within her own. As the spirit voice ceased, the invalid stirred and whispered, "Myra, darling, there is a wonderful light in this room, so pure and soft. The angels are here in great numbers ; how blessed is their presence. I think my brother stands beside us, I feel his atmosphere so plainly. Do not weep, my child, all is for the best. It is true I am going to leave you in one sense, but in another I shall be close to you ; in heart, in life, in work I will be by you still."

Later, when she had grown calm, Myra related to her aunt what she had heard from the spirit voice. With the recital a sense of perfect peace seemed to settle upon her entire being. She became resigned to the thought of physical separation from the one who had given her a mother's love, for with her father's words had been borne in upon her heart a conviction that all *would* be

well. As this beautiful condition grew upon her niece, all anxiety faded from the heart of the failing woman. She had felt distressed on Myra's account alone, but now she knew that the peace had come, and looking forward to the change her soul grew calm.

Thus the days passed, bringing the glorious morning of the resurrection to a struggling spirit. It was indeed a morning filled with the glow, and beauty, and clear, rich vitality of October's vintage. To breathe in the atmosphere was a pleasure, and to catch its sunshine was to bathe in light. A quiet stillness reigned in the sick-room. Nothing had passed the lips of the invalid for hours, and she lay among the snowy pillows, herself as fair, and white, and sweet as a stainless lily. The magnetic healer came in and applied his forces to the wasted frame, imparting to it a temporary strength, which served to render the passing hours a period of repose for the sufferer.

As the day advanced, Myra and her friend Helen maintained their places by the dying form, both filled with the solicitude of sorrow and of affection. But the grief of that quiet chamber was tempered by the power of angelic love. The clairvoyant had regained her spiritual sight during the last few days, and now she sat watching the beautiful scene that opened before her inner vision. To her, the room seemed transformed into a bower of loveliness by invisible hands. Festoons upon festoons of radiant flowers hung from walls and ceilings, intermingling with clouds of billowy lace of delicate hues. The carpet was covered with lilies and roses, rich and sweet, while here and there a brilliant star seemed to flash out from the scene, illuminating the

place with a wondrous light. White-robed forms flitted to and fro. There were her own dear mother and little Pearl. There was aunt Mabel, Carrie's only sister, who had "died" forty years ago. How beautiful and youthful she appeared. There was Helen's mother looking on and occasionally adding a suggestion of beauty to the scene. Myra gazed and gazed upon this wondrous tableau, and as she did so she perceived her father step forward from some unseen corner, and with him was a fair-haired, pleasant-looking man, who appeared like a scholar or a studious person. This spirit advanced to the bed and placed his hand upon the sufferer's brow. "Dear soul!" he whispered, "she will soon be with her own. Oh! I have waited long for this hour. My 'Calla,' my soul's true love."

As though she heard the spirit's whisper, the sick woman stirred and murmured: "Yes, Ralph, I am wholly yours. Many years have passed since you crossed to the other shore, but I have never forgotten our love. We shall soon meet to part no more."

At this moment there came a peal of the door-bell, and Myra started as in pain. "Helen," she whispered, "please don't let any one in. Muffle the bell; and deny me to all callers."

Helen nodded, and passed from the room. The faded lips of the dying woman moved, and a voice, clear and distinct, issued from them. "Deny all others, Myra, but not this one who seeks admittance. Let her enter a few moments, and you, my child, go to her with the words that are given you to speak. It is a soul in distress, who comes to seek counsel and light." The voice was not aunt Carrie's; it was that of a man, full

and rich, and Myra recognized in it her father's tones. She arose, and followed Helen from the room.

In the parlor below stood a lady, tall, and glowing with beauty, but with lines of pain upon her brow, and an expression of care in her dark eyes. She was listening to Helen Long, who was rapidly explaining the situation of affairs in the house. Turning to go, the lady encountered the blind girl, who laid a detaining hand on her arm, and said: "I am bidden to come to you. You are a stranger, but there is distress in your heart. Do not distrust your husband. He does not weary of you. His coldness, his seeming indifference, arise from a troubled heart. There is a secret in his life connected with the long ago. It is wearing on him. Unfortunately your husband loved and wooed a young girl; it was before your marriage with him. She did not belong to his station in life, though she was pure and sweet. Won by his promises, Agnes yielded him her trust, and then, obedient to the wish of his father, he wedded another. The poor girl fell ill and died, leaving a tender babe to the care of its repentant father.

"This is the secret of your husband's life; but do not fear, dear lady, all will yet be righted. You are not unloved. Your husband *adores his wife*, but *despises himself*. He dare not tell you of the burdens that press upon him, but what I tell you is true. The picture in the locket you saw him gazing upon was that of Agnes Clarke, his betrayed love. He wears it as a reminder of his folly and sin. He cherishes her memory as that of a patient, suffering saint, but he *adores* his wife Clara, and loves her child Maude, as he can never love again. Go home with peace

in your heart, for the truth will be revealed. *Come again, but not for some days.*"

The light faded from her eyes, and leaving Helen to usher the astounded visitor — who was none other than the wife of Charles Sprague — from the house, the clairvoyant with a faltering step passed from the room to the chamber above, only to find her aunt wrapped in peaceful slumber.

That afternoon, just as the western sky was all ablaze with the glories of a radiant sunset, the peaceful spirit of Caroline Grey took its flight. Again were the spiritual eyes of Myra opened, and in that supreme moment she watched the passage of a soul from earth into heaven. A pure white mist slowly developed from the prostrate form upon the bed, gradually taking shape as a human being, clothed in garments of shimmering white. As the features formed Myra recognized them as those of her aunt; but, oh! so beautiful, so lighted up with joy and expectation, as to appear almost dazzling even to her spiritual sight. At length the form seemed completed, and at the moment a cord of light binding it to the stiffening body upon the bed, snapped in twain, and the spiritualized being stepped or floated down upon the flower-carpeted floor. She was immediately surrounded by the attending spirits, who, with gentle embraces and words of welcome gave her greeting. Then, as Myra watched, she saw the newly arisen spirit pass out from the place, and, as her vision extended, she beheld a distant country with glowing skies, and lands covered with rich verdure. Glistening domes and graven turrets, alabaster-like walls and gleaming roofs shone in the clear blue of the atmosphere, and

here she knew were the halls and homes of contented spirits. Presently the watcher saw her group of friends pass within an open gateway, and up to the entrance of a beautiful dwelling. Here they paused, and directed the gaze of the new-comer to the surrounding prospect, evidently indicating that this was to be her home. Then they passed on up to the portal, where they threw over "aunt Carrie" garlands of sweet flowers, and thus gaily decked, they led her in triumph into the immortal home she had founded by her good works.

But on earth remained sad duties to be performed, and with a heavy heart Myra Grey waited the hour when all that was mortal of her beloved relative should be consigned to its last resting-place.

For three days they kept the body surrounded by flowers, and reposing in a silver-mounted casket of pearl gray. Heavy folds of a soft white material, tied by a bow of violet ribbon — typical of the pure soul that had passed in trusting faith to God — fell from the bell-knob of the outer door, causing the feet of strangers who approached with the intention of calling professionally upon the famous clairvoyant, to turn aside with errand unfulfilled; and only the forms of valued friends passed through the little hall to bear their burden of sympathy to the stricken mourner.

An atmosphere of holy peace veiled the place. A strange light not of earth shone upon stairway and chamber. The angels were present, filling the entire house with their uplifting influence. At the hour appointed, friends gathered to listen to the simple, beautiful service over the remains. The sweetest of spiritual songs were rendered by a choir of trained voices.

Words replete with consolation and soulful instruction were uttered by the aged man — a lifelong friend of Caroline Grey — whose voice had often carried the balm of peace to wounded hearts. His faith was that of the liberal Unitarian — loving, simple, and trusting; a belief in the all-goodness and tender protection of the Divine Father — and in its utterance this pure-minded man always uplifted the mourner to a clearer comprehension of the goodness and the love of God.

Myra Grey and Helen Long, each clad in softly clinging, dove-colored garments, occupied seats at the head of the casket, the sightless one leaning upon her friend as if for support. But as the final notes of the closing hymn died into silence, a new power came upon the clairvoyant, and, rising from her seat, her voice thrilling with emotion, she rendered in touching tones her tribute of honor and respect to the relative she loved. At the grave also, as the first handful of dust fell upon the casket, a simple, soulful prayer to heaven, filled with the pathos of trusting, clinging faith, ascended from the lips of the inspired girl, bearing a message of peace to each heart, and leaving a tender, holy influence upon her own spirit.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVELATIONS FROM BEYOND.

It was not until some weeks had elapsed that Myra Grey recovered the full strength of her wonderful medial powers. The shock of her aunt's death had left an impression upon her sensitive heart, that could not readily be effaced. Though she realized as only those who are privileged to hold conscious communion with the departed can, that her beloved relative had only been removed to a higher and a less limited sphere of action; though she was convinced that she was now no less the object of the care, attendance, and affection of that dear one than formerly; — yet there were hours in the life of the seeress when she yearned, with aching heart, for the *physical* presence of that best loved of all friends. But as the sense of change and newness wore away, Myra came to live more fully in the spiritual. Her powers not only regained their former vigor, but they seemed really to increase in volume. Forms and faces, lighted by the indescribable and self-illuminating glory which proved them to be creatures of a diviner sphere, appeared to her; beings of pure thought and high endeavor visited her by day and night, and gave to the seeress such lofty teachings and wise counsel as to almost confound the seekers after truth in mortal life who gathered around her. The powers of Helen Long, too, increased in depth and tone; for frequently, as evening shadows gathered in the quiet séance-room,

those mysterious shapes would appear in clouds of misty light, issuing seemingly from the side of Helen, and assuming the form, proportions, and features of well-loved friends.

Only Helen and Myra were present at these sittings, for, as yet, their guides would not allow the entrance of others. The medium, whose organism was used for the manifestation of these appearances, never lost consciousness during the hours of trial, though a peculiar, dreamy, but pleasing sensation, accompanied by a lessening of the vital forces, usually stole upon her while the process of these formations was going on. This sensation had at least the effect of keeping Helen in a quiet, passive condition, thus enabling the spirit operators to make such use of her magnetic aura as their work required. It was a happy moment to Helen Long when for the first time she recognized in the shape developing from the mists issuing from her side, the form and features of her own beloved mother; and had it not been for the dreamy feelings we have mentioned, which held her senses in thrall, she would doubtless have sprung forward in her enthusiasm, and clasped that ethereal being to her breast. As it was, a tender, joyous, *satisfied* peace crept into her heart at the sight, which no after events in life ever removed. The next form to appear was that of "aunt Carrie," dear loving "aunt Carrie," who from the spirit world was exercising already all her best powers and energies for the fulfillment of the mission of love to earth. How radiant, how perfectly contented she appeared, and with what a transcendently beautiful smile she faded away! In a few days this visitant was followed by Myra's own

mother, and on this occasion the power was so great that little Pearl also appeared and stood by her side. Oh, wonderful sight! Here in the darkening shadows of that dainty apartment, stood two radiant beings, clothed in shimmering garments, — each form seemingly composed of tiny particles of light, misty, vaporous, almost transparent in their witching beauty; and both united by slender, delicate threads to the young woman, who in her semi-entrancement watched them with a tender smile.

The blind medium could not of course see these forms as they appeared outwardly to her companion, but her own interest in the manifestation was not lessened on that account. Her clairvoyant vision served her in good stead at these sittings, as, through its operation, she beheld the workings of those spirits who were the most active in producing these marvelous results; and when her aunt appeared she knew in advance what features would look out from the temporary form woven by the spirit chemists. Often in former years Myra had said to her relative: "I cannot see your physical body, auntie, but sometimes when you approach me, I can see your spiritual, and oh, auntie, it is beautiful!"

Now as the formation of this mystic shape advanced, Myra leaned forward and whispered in Helen's ear, "You are going to see aunt Carrie as she really is — they are making a form through which her spiritualized features will shine upon you. I know you will think her a lovely being."

As the days passed, the clairvoyant regained her former cheerfulness of spirit. In her companion Helen

she found an invaluable friend and confidante — one upon whom she could lean as a protector and caretaker. Since the opening of her aunt's last illness a good sensible maid-of-all-work had been added to the household, and thus many of the heavier domestic duties of the home had fallen from Helen's shoulders; but as housekeeper and general manager, she filled perfectly the sphere vacated by the arisen spirit. In resuming her public labors, Myra found her reward, for upon the second day of this work, she perceived in her room the loving presence of "aunt Carrie," who had come to support her niece in her spiritual duties in the same loving care as of old. The spirit smiled upon the clairvoyant, and whispered; "I can be more to you now than before; you will not be deprived of my assistance, and in my visits you will behold me as I am. Once you could hear, but not see me. Now you shall both listen to my voice and look upon my face, that you may know I am still your own."

Among the first to visit the seeress after her resumption of public work, was one whom we have learned to know and love as the wife of Charles Sprague. For years she had known the clairvoyant by reputation, and from all that she had learned from friends, she held a high opinion of that lady's worth, even though she did not understand nor accept her claims of occult or spiritual power. But Mrs. Sprague was no bigot. She could tolerate the opinions, and hold respect for the honest thought of others, though she did not comprehend nor agree with them herself.

The settled melancholy of her husband, his air of reserve toward herself, and his evident avoidance of her

society, had all wrought such a depressing effect upon the life of Clara Sprague during the summer, that her health waned, and her former splendid vitality decreased to a perceptible degree. Hers was not a nature to unburden its cares to others. She always preserved her own counsel and kept her anxieties from the knowledge of her friends. But of late the secret fears that assailed her seemed too grievous to be borne. She felt as if she must seek counsel from some source, — but to whom should she turn for aid? Both her parents had long since passed from earth; her only sister was a leader in fashionable society, to whom she could not impart her anxieties; and as for seeking an explanation and understanding with her husband — that seemed equally out of the question.

Several times the request of many friends the previous winter that she visit Miss Grey, the blind clairvoyant, returned to her mind in these days of darkening trial. Despite the assurances of those of her social circle, who had visited the mysterious sibyl, that she would be repaid in doing so, Mrs. Sprague had refused to seek the presence of the seeress, — not through fear of results, nor because of any prejudice against the woman, but, for some unaccountable reason she shrank from the visit. She had, of course, never learned of her husband's call upon the medium, and knew nothing of the revealments that had been made to him at that time.

As her fears increased, and the dread that her husband might be chafing beneath the family ties that bound him grew stronger, a desire to confirm or dispel the foreboding seized upon Clara Sprague. In her

heart she believed that the man she loved was weary of her claims upon him, and that her existence as his wife was a constant pain to him. But to *know* this — if it were a fact — was what she wished, and when its truth came home to her, she would decide her future course of action.

In this frame of mind — unhappy as a loving, faithful heart could be — the woman resolved to seek an interview with the famous clairvoyant, and see if her reputed powers could unravel the snarl that seemed to entangle her life; and so on that brilliant October morning, as we have seen, Clara Sprague, while spending a day in town — for she had not yet deserted her country villa for the city home — called upon Myra Grey, and received the strange revealments recorded in the preceding chapter.

Amazed, almost stupefied, yet with her heart relieved of its worst fears, the lady retired from the home of the mysterious seeress. She must have time to think over what she had heard, and for days she pondered the strange message. She could not doubt the sincerity and honor of the sightless woman, who had stood before her with a strange light in her eyes, and in hurried tones repeated those wonderful things to her. It was a house of mourning to which she had gone, and the very circumstances of the hour would alone preclude the possibility of deception, even if the whole aspect of the clairvoyant did not prohibit the suspicion. Beside, there was much in the revelation to convince Mrs. Sprague, on consideration, that what she had heard was true. Painful as it was to learn that her husband had betrayed and abandoned another, she felt it but just

that she should learn more. She was convinced that in some way Owen Norcross had gained his power over Charles Sprague through this secret, and she desired to free her husband from this weight.

Thus it was that Clara questioned: Was it right for her to pry into her husband's life? Was it best for her to seek to know the secrets of his heart? She was a true and faithful wife. Her love was so great that she could pardon his sin, and help him to find relief from its woes. Then should she not seek from the unseen, what she could not find elsewhere? Yes, she resolved that she would, and so once again she visited the clairvoyant, but this time for light and guidance as to her best course.

At this sitting, Mrs. Sprague learned more of the woman who had died a victim to Charles Sprague's wrong-doing. That spirit came to her, and in gentle tones spoke of the past, telling of her sorrow at the man's unhappiness, expressing her forgiveness for his sin against herself, and seeking to aid the astonished wife in bringing his heart to a state of peace and joy. This was indeed a pure and lofty soul who spoke, and Clara Sprague felt her heart go out in love toward the beautiful, injured spirit, who in such gentle tones whispered her story, and spoke of pardon.

Agnes mentioned her lonely child, Olive, and as the lady listened to the pleading, sorrowing tones of that spirit mother, she silently registered a vow to bring that child into her own home, and to guard her with motherly care, — a vow which the angels on high recorded with joyful hearts. "Do nothing at present," said the spirit, "but promise me to come here again before you

“speak to your husband of what you have learned. On the twenty-seventh of November, if you will meet us, we will advise you how to proceed. Dear lady, Charles Sprague loves you with his whole heart. He dare not approach you with endearing terms, for he thinks you care but little for him at best, and that, should you learn the secret of his life, you would despise him. But fear not, the way will be made plain to you, and the angels will guide and bless you both.”

Clara promised to return at the time appointed, and to say nothing in the meanwhile to her husband concerning the things she had heard. Agnes Clarke then withdrew, giving place to two other spirits, whom Myra saw and described to the sitter. “They are holding a beautiful crown of light over your head,” she said. “They come in blessing to you, for they are your parents. Oh! how their love goes out to you. I get their names now — ‘Horace and Anna York.’ Your mother passed away first, your father later. He always wore a ring on the little finger of his left hand, enclosing some of her hair, which is a beautiful auburn. He was a large, grand, stately man; she a slender, clinging woman. Now your mother speaks; I will repeat her words.”

Here followed a lengthy message, replete with spiritual advice and tender consolation, as well as abounding in evidences of their identity. This communication from an angel mother brought tears to the eyes of the daughter, who listened, carefully gathering up every word and tone that fell from those lips that seemed freighted with divinest consolation and love.

CHAPTER IX.

OLIVE FINDS A NEW FRIEND.

THE Governor of the State had issued a proclamation appointing Thursday, November twenty-eighth, as a day of thanksgiving and praise. Early in the month the Spragues had returned to their city home for the winter; and by this time they were settled in their old quarters, which, with all their spacious roominess and splendid appointments, could not furnish ease or contentment to the two suffering hearts that beat within their walls. Of the members of that little family, whose lot seemed such an enviable one to the outside world, only one experienced the joys of unsullied happiness. "Little Maude," as she had always been called — now a sprightly, sparkling girl of thirteen, graceful as an houri and beautiful as a picture, shone like a sunbeam in the home life of the parents who adored her. The cheerful, sunny temperament of the girl, her pleasant bearing and the witching beauty of her person, rendered her a general favorite. No wonder she made friends easily, for Maude herself seemed always to draw out the best from those she met, and to see nothing of their more unlovely qualities.

Even Owen Norcross became more affable and less concerned with his own selfish interests in her presence; but of all persons the girl disliked this man, in spite of her efforts to overcome the feeling. He had been invited to pass the approaching "Thanksgiving-day"

with the Spragues in their own home, but the invitation was not a pleasing one to Maude, who felt that if she was to occupy the same room and sit at the same board for a whole day with the man whom she instinctively distrusted, she should forget to raise her soul in thankful praise for the blessings of life and health and home; and she looked forward to the day with less anticipation and pleasure than she would have done, had not the dread of his coming filled her usually sunny heart with gloom.

Mrs. Sprague did not forget her appointment for the twenty-seventh of November, and promptly at the hour engaged she made her appearance in the quiet home of the clairvoyant. As she seated herself in her accustomed place, Myra said to her visitor: "My guides desired me to sit for no one to-day but yourself, so we have dismissed all callers. They tell me that much power is to be displayed at this sitting, and they request the presence of my companion who is a medium of rare quality. Do you object?"

Assured that whatever the higher powers desired would be agreeable to her sitter, Myra touched her silver bell and Helen entered the room, taking her place opposite her friend. In a few moments the clairvoyant passed into the lucid state, and began as follows: —

"Dear lady, there is a delightful atmosphere around you, in which the angels who love you dwell. I see your mother, who brings this message: 'My child, be of good cheer; the light is breaking, and your heart will soon rejoice in its glow. Your father joins me in much love. We shall yet come to you in such ways as will bring conviction to your soul. We bless you and

your home. We bless your darling Maude, who is the treasure of your life; and we bless your husband Charles, who has noble traits of character. He has to be redeemed in his own eyes, and you, my child, shall, with the help of the angels, prove the instrument of his redemption. There is work to be done this day, which will show the power of heavenly love. Be calm, and obey the voice of the spirit.'"

A few moments of silence followed. The two mediums seemed enwrapped in a reverie of their own; the atmosphere of the room was one of quiet peace, and the visitor felt all anxiety and care slipping from her heart, as she sensed the glory and serenity of those invisible presences of whom she had just been told.

Again the voice of the seeress disturbed the stillness. A gentle light shone in the sightless orbs as they turned upon the lady, and a vein of tender sweetness thrilled through the pleasant tones: "Lady, again I approach you. You wish to right a great wrong, and to help a suffering heart. I have power to-day to tell you all you wish to know. Let me briefly repeat what once before I have told you in this way. My name was Agnes Clarke. At the age of seventeen I met and was wooed by Charles Sprague, then of Tarrytown. He won my love, and promised me marriage. I yielded to his desires in trusting confidence. In a few brief months he abandoned me to wed another. I was a simple country girl, and not a fitting mate for the scion of a proud race. Charles did not know that I was to become a mother, when he deserted me, but such was the fact; and in three months after his marriage my

little girl was born, and in a few days my spirit passed from earth.

“The father of my child did not abandon her when he learned of her existence and of my fate, but he has cared for her through all her life, providing her with a good home and an excellent education. She is now fourteen years old. She is called Olive Clarke, and though she has many times seen her father, she does not know of his relationship to her. I am sure your husband loves my gentle child, but the care and pain the knowledge of her birth costs him, and the necessity of preserving its secret, has so covered up that love that he hardly realizes its power, and he only recognizes the trial that her existence is to him. Lady, you are good and true. You have a warm heart. You are yourself a mother. You are respected, honored, and beloved. You have a name, and all that makes existence dear, save your husband’s confidence, and that will soon be yours. My child is in great peril, and I come to you to rescue her from her present position.

“You love your husband, and his devotion is yours alone. I lay no claim upon him, only to ask tenderness for my child. I love him as a spirit, freed from the passions and trammels of earth, alone can love. He and his are dear to me, and I will serve them to the end. Every hour I pray for their happiness, and your pleasure, dear lady, is a part of my life.

“Listen; your husband’s secret is known to Owen Norcross. That man trades upon it. He is a blight on Charles Sprague’s life. A short time ago, her father was obliged to find a new home for Olive, and he confided her to the care of Norcross, who tells her his name

is Owen Clarke, and that *he* is her father. He has taken her to his gambling den in Oxley, and the man means to keep my child as long as he can extort money from your husband on her account. We ask your help. *This day* you will find Olive Clarke. Spirit power is at work to bring it about. Will you take her to your home? If so, she shall be the means of uniting your husband and yourself. The misunderstanding shall be explained, the secret revealed, and the false friend cast adrift. All this will come if you will aid us in our work. Be a friend to my child, and heaven will smile upon you and yours."

Again the entranced medium repeated the promise that Olive Clarke should be brought to Mrs. Sprague that very day; and that lady, who had not lost a word of this strange recital, promised to care for the child if by any chance she should be brought in her way.

"That you may know I am not a spirit of darkness, and that you may recognize my face by the likeness you caught a glimpse of in your husband's locket, I, Agnes Clarke, am permitted to show myself to you this hour. Please keep very quiet, and let this blessed work go on." And at the last words the clairvoyant ceased to speak, and sank backward in her chair.

Another spell of almost breathless silence ensued, during which Mrs. Sprague watched apprehensively the collection of a mass of vaporous substance that seemed to issue from the left side of the apparently half sleeping woman who had been introduced to her as "Miss Long." As it gathered, the misty material began to assume shape, and in a little while, standing in the midst of a cloudlike column of light, there appeared the

form of a beautiful young woman, sweet and smiling, and gazing upon her amazed reviewer with tender eyes. This airy being was clothed in spotless garments that fairly shone, — as glistens snow on a frosty morning, — her features were clearly cut and distinct, and the whole form seemed replete with the beauty of celestial life. As she smiled and bowed, the strong voice of a man issued from the lips of Myra, and said: "This, my child, is the lovely spirit whom you have heard called 'Agnes Clarke.' She is pure and good. No taint of earthly selfishness or jealousy enters into her nature. She loves you and yours, as you will come to love her and her child. There is no passion in heaven. I am your father, Horace York, who speaks to you. Look, and you will now see one whom you tenderly love. Be faithful, be just, and God's blessing attend you. Farewell."

As the voice — the tones of which were recognized by the sitter as her father's own — ceased, the form of Agnes faded away, leaving only the cloud of golden light. Again the vapor rolled into balls and gathered in volume until once more a tender face, surmounting a female form of matchless beauty, looked out from that pillar of light, and smiled with joy upon the trembling woman, who in these wondrous features recognized those of the beloved mother whom she had mourned as dead.

It was with a thankful heart, but with strangely mingled emotions of joy, sadness, and wonderment, that Clara Sprague closed her momentous visit to the clairvoyant. Hers was a strongly tenacious and perceptive nature, quick to grasp a truth, and not slow in gaining an understanding of its worth. As she turned toward home, her mind, reviewing the occurrences of the

afternoon, was busy with the classification of all the details of that experience which she had just encountered.

Just how she was to unravel the tangled skein of her husband's life she could not see. Just how he and she were to come together in mutual harmony of purpose, she was unable to divine. Just in what way the currents of their lives were to be brought into one channel, she could not fathom; nor could she understand what would bring the motherless Olive to her care;—yet a conviction had entered her heart that all these things should be speedily outwrought.

Alighting from the street car, Mrs. Sprague paused before a large establishment, momentarily attracted by the display of certain goods in its windows. The afternoon was growing late, and already its lengthening shadows fell across the street. As she turned to continue on her way, the lady was arrested by the sound of a timid voice speaking to her, and turning, she beheld a young girl, with pleading blue eyes, and fluffy golden hair, who seemed to be in a state of trepidation and alarm. "What is it, child?" the lady kindly inquired.

"Can you tell me where the 'Jamison House' is? I think it is a hotel."

"The 'Jamison'?—oh! that is some distance from here. But why do you wish to go there? I am told it is not a nice place."

"Oh, lady! I know nothing of it, but the friend who came to town with me left me this forenoon to go to the 'Jamison,' where she hoped to find my father and bring him to me. I have waited so long, I fear something has happened, and I thought I would try to find her."

"Are you a stranger in town? Have you no friends?" inquired the lady, moved to pity by the girl's distress, and strangely stirred by the glance of those blue eyes that reminded her of her husband's own.

"I was never in this city before, but my father is here somewhere. I am living with his housekeeper at Oxley. Three days ago she asked me if I would not like to come here and spend Thanksgiving week, as she wished to make some purchases for me. I consented, for I do not know *any one* in Oxley, and it is a little dull there. Mrs. Banks wrote my father we were coming, and requested him to meet us either at the depot, or at May's Bazäär. We did not find him, and she left me in the ladies' parlor of the bazäär to wait her return. She said she would find father at the 'Jamison,' and bring him back with her. That was eleven o'clock, and I waited until half an hour ago. Mrs. Banks has not returned, and I fear something has happened to her."

"I do not like to have you go to that house alone, child; it is not a proper place for one so young and inexperienced. My home is not far distant, and if you will accompany me there, I will send a servant to inquire for your father. What is his name?"

A look of relief flashed into the blue eyes as she lifted them gratefully to the kind lady, and in a timid voice the girl replied, "Owen Clarke."

Mrs. Sprague started, and a flush passed over her face at the words. "Owen Clarke! And what is your name, child?" she asked in a husky tone. "Olive Clarke—" came the answer she was now prepared to hear.

In a moment the startled woman regained her com-

posure, and in a tone at once reassuring and gentle, she touched the young stranger on the arm, and said :

“ Yes, Olive, you must come to my home. I will be your friend. We shall have no difficulty in finding your father. Will you trust me ? ”

“ Oh, lady, you are so kind ! I did not know what to do. It was all so strange, and night was coming on. I thought I must start out and find my way to Mrs. Banks. Do you think anything has happened to her ? ”

“ No, child, I trust not. She has been delayed, that is all. But you need not fear ; I will take care of you until you find your natural protectors. Come, we will go to my home, where you shall meet my own daughter, who will give you welcome, and entertain you till your father comes.”

CHAPTER X.

THANKSGIVING.

AN hour later, when warmed and refreshed, and made to feel at home, Olive was left in the pretty sitting-room of Maude Sprague, to be entertained by that young miss until dinner should be served. A sense of being protected, and a feeling of perfect contentment had crept into the heart of the girl, while in the presence of the kind lady who had listened to her story and led her to this beautiful abode; and now as she stood timidly listening to the lively chatter of her companion, she longed as never before for a sister or an associate of her own age.

Maude, with her sparkling black eyes and dusky curls; her quick, impulsive nature, manifested in the ringing laughter and rapid speech of her voice; with her restless, darting movements, reminding one of a brilliant bird upon the wing, made a complete contrast to the unknown sister standing by her side, whose dreamy blue eyes, flossy golden hair and delicate features, revealed the shy and sensitive nature that shrank from contact with the busy world. Scarcely more than a year of difference existed between these two young creatures, and although Maude was not large, yet Olive appeared so slight and fragile in her delicate beauty, that the younger might easily be taken for one equal to her in the point of years.

Delighted at the prospect of a companion so near her

own age, if even for a few hours, and won by the gentle demeanor of the unobtrusive girl, Maude had given a genial welcome to the stranger, and now, when left alone with her guest, proceeded to heed the parting injunction of her mother "not to allow Miss Olive to become lonely."

Olive had never stepped on such magnificent carpets, nor beheld such elegant articles of furniture and of decorative art, as met her vision in this mansion. Reared in the simplicity of a country parsonage, all her knowledge of the world's luxury had been derived from such few books of modern life as had fallen in her way. Now she gazed, with the air of an æsthetic person, upon all the loveliness that opened to her sight; no hint of the wonder and astonished delight that filled her being appeared in her bearing. To look upon her, one would suppose she had all her life been familiar with just such rich appointments as surrounded her here, so perfect had been her breeding in the old-fashioned but refined atmosphere of the parson's abode.

While these two young creatures are engaged with each other, we will follow Mrs. Sprague to her husband's private office, where he was most likely to be found at the hour preceding their late dinner. It was a quiet, plainly furnished room at the rear of the house, and opened from the library through which the lady passed. The interview she sought with her husband was to be a secluded one. Just what she should say to him she hardly knew. She felt the hour had come when she must reveal to him her knowledge of his secret; the presence of his unacknowledged child in her house demanded that. Her promise to the angel world to protect

and care for this child glowed like a living flame in her breast. Olive must be retained in this home ; she must never return to the baneful guardianship of Owen Norcross ; and an understanding between her husband and herself must be at once secured.

As she neared the office door, Mrs. Sprague noticed that it stood slightly ajar. The library lay in shadow, but a rosy light streamed through this aperture, and fell in crimson bars across the polished floor. The sound of voices arrested the lady's steps, and caused her to pause, as she recognized the voice of Owen Norcross, speaking in suppressed tones, either of deep earnestness or of passion. She did not catch the words, but the reply of her husband fell full upon her ear.

"It is a great deal of money you ask, Norcross ; but I suppose I must pay it. You know I have never refused you any favor, but just now I am a little tied in my resources. You say that you are straitened, and that you counted on me to relieve you of your embarrassment. Very well, I will do so. You have been a faithful ally and adviser, and I do not forget my indebtedness to you, as your words seem to imply. I have tried to be your friend. It is true you have claim on me in the care of my child. Only keep my secret well, and I will repay you in full."

The tones were weary and tinged with bitterness. The heart of the listener throbbed with pain as they reached her ears, but the smooth, oily answer that followed made her shiver with disgust. "Oh ! trust me for that. I will not betray you, as long as you care to have me keep the secret. It *would* be unfortunate to have it reach the ears of Mrs. Sprague." A groan from

his victim assured the tormentor that his words had taken effect, but what was his surprise to hear in cool, cutting tones from the doorway, —

“We will relieve you from all further obligation and responsibility in this affair, Mr. Norcross. The ‘secret’ is fully known to me. You have no need to threaten my husband; nor can you further extort money from him as the price of your silence. The whole history of Agnes Clarke and her child Olive is in my possession. My husband and I will discuss this story between ourselves. We do not need an interpreter, nor an adviser between us.”

Had the earth opened beneath their feet, the two men could not have been more startled and affrighted, than they were by these words, spoken by Mrs. Sprague from the open doorway. At sight of his wife, Charles bowed his head upon his breast, and an expression of despair settled upon his features. Passing to his side, Clara placed one hand upon his shoulder, and standing thus, confronted the dark-visaged man, who gazed upon her with livid countenance. A sneer settled upon his face, as he said:

“You *think* you know all, but you are mistaken. It is not wise for a wife to attempt to pry into the secrets of her husband’s past; she may find a ghastly skeleton, that will rob her of all peace.”

“Sir, you offend me. Spare me all insinuations or attempted explanation. I know *all*. The existence of Olive Clarke shall be no skeleton in this house; nor will we longer burden you with the guardianship of her person. She shall be placed in her proper position, and receive the protection which is her right.”

"All very well, madam ; but what if I object to yield her up? No one knows where I have secreted her. Your husband himself is ignorant. I have not been so foolish as to snare my bird, and then leave her cage open to those who might choose to rob me of her."

"We shall see," replied the lady, as she touched the bell-cord ; then, pressing her hand gently upon the still bowed head of her stricken husband, she said : "Charles, look up, and face this man who is no friend to you. He won your confidence, only to betray it when he could no longer use you. I know *all*. I am your wife, and will share your burdens. You have nothing to fear."

The tones were full of sympathy and cheer, and they floated upon the tortured senses of the sorely tried man to whom they were addressed, with a cooling, healing power. He raised his head, and with haggard eyes gazed into the luminous orbs of the wife who bent above him. What love, what compassion, what tender helpfulness did he read in their limpid depths ; enough, surely, to impart a life-giving strength to his frame, and a sensation of hope to his tortured heart.

In response to the summons a servant appeared, to whom his mistress said, "You will find Miss Maude and a friend in the rose parlor ; send both to me at once."

The man withdrew, and Owen Norcross, drawing nearer to the husband and wife, repeated in triumphant tones : "I affirm that you will have difficulty in finding the girl. She is in my power, and unless you will make terms with me, you shall not know her hiding-place. She believes me to be her father, and she has no idea of

claiming any protection but mine, even if she had the chance."

There was no reply, for a sound of footsteps was heard outside the door, which presently opened, revealing two girlish forms standing upon its threshold. The arm of the younger was thrown around her guest, and her silken, raven curls floated upon the shoulder and mingled with the more curly golden locks of the encircled form.

An apparition from the unseen world would not have caused the consternation that fell upon Charles Sprague and Owen Norcross at the sight of this tableau. Olive in this house! What did it mean? For a moment no one spoke. The two men gazed as upon a phantom; the lady remained silent, enjoying the situation, until noticing the bewildered expression deepening into one of terror upon the innocent face of Olive, she said: "Did I not tell you, dear, we should find him?"—motioning toward the elder man, as she spoke. "It is all right, as you will learn very soon. This gentleman"—touching her husband lightly on the arm,—“you have seen many times. This is his home. Go now with Maude, until I come to you.”

At a sign from her mother, Maude, who was filled with curiosity at the strangeness of the scene, led her guest away, and in a few moments was expatiating to that young lady upon the goodness of her own well-loved father, Charles Sprague.

Mrs. Sprague did not explain how the unacknowledged girl came to be in her home, but, turning to the vanquished Norcross, she calmly said: "You will now admit, sir, that the child has no longer need of your

guardianship. She is in the home of her natural protectors, and will be cared for. We shall dispense with your services hereafter."

Baffled but not humbled, the man she addressed gazed steadily into the lady's face, and said: "You will not speak so boldly when the world comes to know this story. Let your husband's shame be repeated in every home where you visit, and your proud head will not be held as high as you carry it to-night."

"If the world learns our secret, we can bear its judgment. That will not deter us from doing our duty. But you will hardly dare, sir, to ventilate the secrets of other lives, while you have so many of your own to hide. Your connection with the 'Jamison House' will not bear inspection; nor will you care to have the mysteries of your gambling den at Oxley revealed to the public eye. Beware how you trifle with others, lest you find yourself ensnared!"

The random shot told, for at the words Owen Norcross turned pale as death, and without another sign lifted his hat from a side table and passed from the house. The man was in a blind fury. He did not understand the position at all. How much of his secret life Mrs. Sprague had learned, and by what agency, he was unable to tell. Surely she must have had some skillful detective on his track, who had hunted him down. Little did he dream that all the information she possessed concerning the nature of his house at Oxley had that very afternoon been obtained from the blind clairvoyant; and that her hint of his connection with that disreputable place, the "Jamison," had arisen from

the suspicions aroused in her mind by what she had learned from Olive in the street that day.

The letter written to him by Mrs. Banks two days previous, announcing her intended visit to the city that morning, had not been received by Norcross, through some mismanagement of the mails; hence it happened that he was not at the station, nor at May's fancy bazäar, to meet that lady and Olive, as they had expected. Neither was he at the "Jamison"—a place of questionable resort, in which, unknown to his aristocratic friends, Norcross held a monetary interest—when Mrs. Banks reached that place. Here, however, she determined to wait awhile, believing the man she sought would soon appear, and intending to leave a message for him should he fail to do so. The comely widow was not a stranger in this place, and she was soon surrounded by old-time friends and associates, who were glad to see her again. If Mrs. Banks had one weakness greater than another, it was her fondness for champagne, and she was not slow to avail herself of the invitation to drink the health of her friends in a bottle of her favorite beverage. Several potations of this sort soon left the woman in such a maudlin condition, that she was unable to think clearly, or even to remember the friendless girl she had left in the great emporium; and it was not until the following morning that she came to a consciousness of the position of affairs.

Leaving Mrs. Banks and Owen Norcross to settle their accounts between themselves, we will return to the husband and wife so strangely brought together; the one, prostrated, weak, and stricken with shame; the

other, calm, noble, and filled with the conscious dignity of a righteous purpose.

As the door closed behind the retreating footsteps of their enemy, and their echo died away, the wife sank on her knees by the side of her husband, and raising his face with her hands gazed lovingly but steadily into his eyes until the shifting glances met her own. Then she commenced to talk, slowly, calmly, and in a voice of tender pathos that thrilled to the soul of the man before her. Quietly she went over the story of her apprehensions and her pain; telling of her visits to the wonderful clairvoyant, and their results, of her meeting with Olive, and what it had produced.

The man listened, and as the recital proceeded a great light of love gathered in his eyes, and trembled through his frame. At length he spoke, pouring out the whole depth of his sorrow and his shame, the burden of his contrition and his love, pausing not until he had laid his heart bare to the faithful soul who knelt beside him.

It is not our purpose to reveal the confidences, the counsels, nor the vows that passed between these united hearts that hour. Suffice it, that at its close no shadow hovered between them to blight them with its gloom. Only perfect trust and love remained to inspire them to the fulfillment of high duty.

That night Olive passed in the beautiful blue chamber adjoining that of Maude, and in the morning her waking thoughts were broken upon by the cheery, bird-like tones of that sprightly girl, bidding her look out upon the golden brightness of "Thanksgiving-day."

It had been explained to the girls that "Mr. Owen Clarke" had consented to leave Olive at the Sprague

mansion for the night, but nothing more had been told them of his visit there. Maude, wise little creature as she was, pondered over the problem that presented the man *she* had known as "Owen Norcross," to her guest as "Owen Clarke"; but she said nothing, knowing that her mother would make the mystery plain.

Thanksgiving-day opened, fair and cloudless, upon a peaceful home. At the breakfast-table the happy, contented faces of her parents, so full of that expression of calm repose which she had seldom witnessed, attracted Maude's attention, and made her exclaim, "I really believe, mamma, you and papa are thinking of all the good things you have to be thankful for to-day."

To which the mother replied in her sweet and gracious manner, "Yes, my dear, it is a day of perfect *thanksgiving* to us both. We have much to be grateful for."

Owen Norcross did not appear at dinner that day, but the feast was not more solemn on that account. Mr. Sprague passed the hours with his wife, discussing the most honorable and correct course for him to pursue in relation to his unacknowledged child.

The lady did not think it necessary to enlighten the world, nor even Olive herself on the true situation of affairs. "The child is somewhat familiar with the thought that you are a near relative, Charles. Your guardianship over her during her life with the country clergyman, and your occasional visits to her, led her to believe that. Let her continue that thought. I will explain to her that you are her natural guardian, and that the man who claimed her as his child is no relative, only an agent whom you sent to care for her until you

could claim her yourself; but he betrayed his trust and forfeited your regard. We will adopt the child legally, and give her our name, and thus she will have a perfect right in the eyes of man, as well as of God, to our protection and care."

CHAPTER XL.

RETRIBUTION.

THE wife so strong, so brave, so loyal in her convictions of right, and in her steadfastness to duty, seemed to impart to the soul of her husband something of her own lofty courage and high-born zeal; and he resolved, at the very earliest opportunity, to take such steps as should give to his eldest child a right and title to his name and to his inheritance. Mingling with the love and admiration which had long been struggling in his heart for the woman who bore his name, there came a feeling of reverential trust, and on this "Thanksgiving-day," as Charles Sprague listened to the counsels of his wife, she appeared in his eyes little less than a saint, who seemed, in her unselfish nobility, almost too pure for contact with such as he. But the soul of the man had grown large through the sorrow and care that had pressed upon it. Reviewing his past life, a searching eye could discover but one stain upon its otherwise blameless record. That blur, cast by the wrong he had wrought upon the life of Agnes Clarke, had been washed by years of tearful remorse, and it now held out the promise of working a sanctifying effect upon the soul of the repentant man. But for that one dark experience, the history of Charles Sprague could bear the world's interpretation. His business career had been pursued with the soundest line of probity and honor. His dealings with his fellow-men, in every department of life, had

been followed in exact accordance with justice and good-feeling — and one might point to him as an example for the young to follow. In his fear of losing the respect of his wife should his secret become known to her, Charles had lost somewhat of the manly courage that had hitherto possessed him, and in his weakness he bowed before the blow that threatened to crush his heart, at the moment when he learned that this woman so dear to him had found him out. But as the conviction of her love, her fealty and her tender compassion dawned upon him, the mists seemed to clear from his eyes, and something of the terrible burden that had weighed him down was lifted from his breast. The native energy and strength of character of the man reasserted itself, and the moral atmosphere in which he had sought to live, infiltrated his being with a new and nobler power.

In his wife's presence he found relief from the horrible pressure, and though he felt humbled and abashed in spirit, as he remembered to what awful depths her pure eyes had looked into his life, yet the discipline was a beneficial one, as it brought his being upward in its uplifting work. To Clara her husband turned as the stray sheep turns to the rescuing shepherd, thankful for protection and support. To him she offered not only the love and sympathy of a faithful wife, but also the tenderness and the devotion of a forgiving mother, who sees the beauty of a repentant heart; and in these hours of reconciliation and soul communion this couple learned to know each other, and to become more truly one.

In due time the proper instruments for the adoption

of Olive Clarke by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sprague were made out and legalized; the girl adding to the name by which she had always been known the surname of her father, and taking her place in the household as a cherished daughter and beloved sister.

In the privacy of her own apartment, Mrs. Sprague had revealed to Olive all that she thought best for her to know concerning the past, and had given the girl permission to address herself and Mr. Sprague as "Mother" and "Father" if she so desired.

Relieved at finding that no tie of relationship existed between the man she had known as "Owen Clarke" and herself, and more than rejoiced at the prospect of making a home with this beautiful lady, the timid Olive asked no questions, but accepted the situation with the simple air of a *satisfied* child. She had always believed her guardian, Mr. Sprague, to be a near relative of her unknown mother, and in some vague way she had thought he must be her own uncle. However, Olive made no objection to the new relationship opening before her, and it was not a great while before she became quite accustomed to the ties that claimed from her a daughter's and a sister's love.

For a time society wondered at this addition to the Sprague family, but the gossip soon ceased, and the new life our friends had entered upon passed serenely for each one; bringing light and happiness to their united hearts.

At first it pained Charles to gaze upon the fair face of his eldest child, but as the weeks rolled by there came to his troubled heart a sense of peace, and even of enjoyment in her company, that quelled all turbulent

emotion ; and before he was aware, the man found himself possessed of a tender attachment for the gentle girl, which promised to develop into richest paternal love. Mrs. Sprague had, from the first, manifested a strong affection for the child brought under her roof. The deep interest she had taken in the history of the waif, and the knowledge that by angelic power had this young life been given to her keeping, only deepened the tenderness that welled up in her heart, and manifested itself in the kindest attention toward its object. As for Maude, she was charmed at the prospect of a sister and companion ; and that vivacious creature—who had learned a little of Olive's history from her mother's lips—tried her best to brighten the life of the girl who had thus strangely come to her.

In return for all this kindness and affection, Olive gave the richest love of her sensitive nature. The days were now full of contentment and joy to her, and she brightened visibly beneath their influence. Her grateful little heart sang constantly its song of praise for the blessings it had found, and the melody of her spirit's song made itself understood to her friends in the sweet, lingering tones of her voice, the beauty of her smile, and the deepening glory of her eyes. A private tutor had long been engaged for Miss Maude, and now it was arranged that the sisters should pursue their studies together under his charge. Olive was found to be a clever and correct scholar, and her musical ability was something wonderful, when it was considered how limited her opportunities for its development had been in her former home.

As the months passed along, Charles Sprague seemed

to enter a new existence. Friends remarked upon his springing step and happy mien, and wondered at the air of lover-like attention toward his wife that set so grandly upon him. Clara, too, seemed to have lost ten years from her life, and more than one of her acquaintances complimented the lady on her fresh appearance.

During this time our clairvoyant and her companion were not forgotten. The revelations that had wrought such a change in the life of our friends were prized by them, as truly from a heavenly source, and an affectionate regard for the quiet mediums who had been instrumental in this work had entered their hearts.

Several times had Mr. and Mrs. Sprague held private séances with the clairvoyant, thus giving their angel friends the opportunity to reach them with words of love and counsel; and from these sittings had convictions of the identity of their departed friends, and the reality of spirit communion, been borne to them.

More than once had the husband and wife held holy communication with the pure spirit of Agnes Clarke in this way, and as this lovely being expressed her pardon and affection for the man for whom she had suffered, a new understanding of divine love entered his soul. The joy and gratitude of Agnes at the present position of her child was electrical in its effect upon both her sitters; and the beautiful influence which she brought more than compensated them for the sorrows they had known.

On two separate occasions, our friends were blessed with a sight of loved spirit faces in the presence of Helen Jong, and the promise of receiving more of these

desirable tokens of heavenly life was held out to them. Twice had Myra and Helen responded to the urgent invitation of the Spragues to visit them in their own home, and occasionally our friends would take these mediums out in their carriage for a refreshing drive. The friendships thus formed were beneficial to both sides, and lasting in their results. From the unobtrusive services of the clairvoyant and her friend, the Spragues derived spiritual counsel and consolation, together with unmistakable evidences of the continued helpfulness and love of their unseen friends; while on the other hand, Myra and Helen received from their association with the Spragues, friendly love and sympathy, and a sense of protection and regard, — not to speak of the substantial tokens of their appreciation of the service the mediums had wrought.

Two years have passed since the introduction of Olive into her father's home, — two years of light and joy and growing peace for each member of that little family. During all this time Owen Norcross has not molested them. At times Charles Sprague has caught a sight of his former associate in public halls, or upon the street, but he has held no communication with him. Just how much of his own dark secrets Mrs. Sprague had learned Norcross could never tell, and it was this uncertainty that had deterred him from repeating the true story of the adopted daughter who had entered the home of those he hated. For some months Charles Sprague had seen nothing of the man, and it was with horror that he listened to the news of a terrible railroad accident, which had happened just outside the city, in which Owen Norcross was reported as dangerously

wounded. The report went that the train had been nearing the city at a rapid rate, when it came in contact with an open switch, which resulted in hurling the engine from the track.

Mr. Sprague immediately set out for the scene of the accident, anxious to offer some service to his former associate. He found Norcross unconscious, and not permitted to receive callers, and leaving his address with the attending physician, our friend retired with a grave face.

Owen Norcross had been taken from the *débris* of a shattered car unconscious, and in a mangled condition. He was conveyed to the nearest house, and there attended by several physicians who pronounced his injuries as probably fatal.

Removal of the wounded man was out of the question, and Jerome Sparks—a friend who had come with him from Oxley, and who by some fortunate chance had received only a few cuts and bruises—proceeded to make Norcross as comfortable as the situation would allow. Under the ministrations of the physician, the insensible man at length regained consciousness, but when he understood his condition, he became so excited that they found it necessary to administer a powerful opiate, not only to lessen his physical pain, but to control his mental rebelliousness.

Leaving his friend to medical care, Jerome Sparks hastened as fast as he could to the city, and from thence into the suburbs, to secure the services of a skillful nurse,—one whom he had known from boyhood, and who had been a life-long friend of his mother. Counting upon the memory of this friendship to secure

her services, the man sought the humble abode of Mrs. Carter, hoping to induce her to undertake the care of his injured friend. His knock at the door was answered by a young woman not more than eighteen years of age, at sight of whom the man started violently, and it was with an assumed voice that he made his errand known. The woman did not seem to recognize the caller, as she in pleasant tones invited him into a sunny little sitting-room, upon the floor of which sat a tiny boy not more than two years of age, whose large dark eyes were lifted in wide astonishment to a chattering parrot that swung in his cage against the wall.

Bidding the stranger be seated, the young woman raised the child, and passed from the room. In a few moments an elderly female of pleasing countenance and plain apparel entered. *She* recognized her caller at once, and he was not mistaken in his anticipation of being well received. At first, Mrs. Carter demurred, and was doubtful about undertaking to nurse the injured man, but her tender heart and quick sympathies were so wrought upon by the tale that the son of her old friend told, that she at length decided to go with him to the scene of disaster and suffering.

On their way thither, Sparks asked the nurse of the young woman she had left in charge of her home, and was told that her name was "Leila White" and that she had lived there for over two years. "She is a beautiful girl who has been foully wronged by some scamp whom we cannot find. When only a child of fifteen she was betrayed by a false marriage, and then abandoned. In her trouble she contemplated self-destruction, but some good angel sent her to a friend of

mine, who pitied and helped her. That lady brought the child to me, and engaged room and board for her at my home. I took her in charge, and when her baby was born I learned to love her and the little helpless thing as my own. They have lived with me ever since, Leila taking care of the home in my absence, and proving a companion to me when I am there. She has become so dear to me that long ago I refused to take a penny from her kind benefactress for her support. Poor child! she has been more sinned against than sinning, and I hope that the perpetrator of the dark deed will meet with a just *retribution*."

CHAPTER XII.

SPIRIT LIFE TO AN ERRING SOUL.

THEY found the injured man still in a semi-conscious condition, from the effects of the drug which had been administered to him; and the nurse quietly took her position by his side, while her escort remained close by to be within call should his services be required. The house which had been turned into a temporary hospital was the property of a large mill owner, who gave orders that no pains should be spared in making the sufferers comfortable beneath his roof. Those whose injuries were so slight as to enable them to bear removal had been taken away, so that now, but one other beside Owen Norcross — an elderly woman, whose paralytic condition prohibited a present change — remained of those who had been stricken down by the disaster. The house had grown quiet, and the traces of confusion obliterated. Slowly the hours dragged away, and the afternoon sunshine deepened into twilight shadows, before the long vigil of the watchers was rewarded by the sight of returning sensibility to the eyes of their patient. But at length the quiet nurse discovered that the sufferer had regained consciousness, and rising, she administered to him a spoonful of the beef-tea and brandy that the physician had ordered. With a groan the patient sought to turn upon his pillow, but the effort was too much for him,

and the expression of pain settled still more deeply into his swarthy features.

For a while he lay motionless, then suddenly opening his eyes, he whispered, "Where is Sparks? I want him."

The nurse beckoned to the man from the room beyond, who noiselessly approached, bending over the form of his prostrate friend.

"Sparks"—came the feeble whisper—"it's all up with me, I fancy. Flesh and blood can't stand such a rack-ing as I've had. I feel as though my insides had fallen out. Ah! well, it had to come some way, I suppose, and this is to be the end."

"Oh, no! perhaps not," came the low reply. "If you keep quiet, and obey the doctors, they may pull you through. But they say you must not move or speak—"

"Pish! I shall talk!" and the sick man moved impatiently, which gave him such a spasm of pain that he groaned again.

"For pity sakes, don't let him talk!" said the nurse, as she arose and left the room to summon the physician.

"I must say it, Jerome, if I die. See what you can do for—Kitty Banks—poor thing, I believe she loves me, and will take it hard. The house is hers, and she has money of her own in the bank—but she may need an adviser—promise me, old chap, you will be her friend."

The words were spoken low, but with vehemence, and Sparks, alarmed for the result of this effort on the sufferer's part, pressed his hand, and answered, "I will, I will."

“There’s one thing more I want to say” — continued Norcross, catching his breath. “It’s about Leila — that little girl. I’m sorry for that affair, I wouldn’t do it over again. Sometime you may find her. Help her, if she needs a friend. It’s too bad how we served the little thing.”

The tone was not one of such true contrition as bears with it the weight of sorrow and remorse, but rather one of mild regret, as one hears in listening to the confession of some simple folly; but the man who listened did not discriminate, and, surprised at any exhibition of repentance on the part of his associate, he bent his head still lower, and whispered in an eager tone, so that the nurse — who had returned and stood opposite, waiting the entrance of the physician — could not hear: —

“Let me relieve your mind. You need not be troubled on this score. We did not deceive the girl, for she was made your wife in legal form.”

The dark eyes of the injured man turned upon the speaker in fierce incredulity, and the pallid lips framed the sentence — “What do you mean?”

“Just what I say. Leila is your wife. I was not only educated at college for the ministry, but early in life I received ordination and the degrees of a clergyman. Though my natural bent made the life distasteful to me, yet I preached regularly for three years in a little church not far away. Long before I knew you I drifted away from my pastorate and its work, into the world and its toils. But my right to perform the marriage ceremony has never been abrogated, and when you and Leila White stood before me, disguised though I was, I

made the wedding knot so tight that only the law could loosen it. To the marriage certificate, which I kept in my possession, I appended your true name, and also my own, which is Jerome Sparks Chase."

There was a sound of steps at the door, and the nurse moved forward. No notice was taken of this by the man whose eyes had grown blood-shot and almost wild in the last moment, and who now demanded in his weakening voice — "What made you do this?"

"The innocence and trusting faith of a mere child, who seemed to me very like a young sister of mine who had died. Hardened as I had grown as a sporting-man, I was not ready to deceive and ruin a life like that. I am glad, and so will you now be, that we have not this sin upon our souls."

No more was said, for at this juncture the grave physician reached the bedside and touched the pulse of his patient, which was bounding rapidly.

"This will never do," he said sternly; "all excitement must be avoided. Everything depends on perfect quiet being maintained. Madam," turning to Mrs. Carter, "I rely on you to keep every one out of this apartment."

The medical man examined the injuries of his patient, and after administering a potion to him, and leaving a few more instructions with the nurse, withdrew from the room, beckoning the man we have known as Sparks to follow him.

Outside the door, the physician said: "This is a very critical case; I have but little hope for it. I think it best that some one beside the nurse should be within call, as the patient may become unmanageable should a par-

oxysm of pain seize him during the night. Perhaps you had better share her watch, but, mind you — there must be no talking. I wish to be summoned at once if you observe a pronounced change.”

Sparks assured the doctor that he understood and would obey his commands, and in a moment more returned to the sick-room and stationed himself at the foot of the bed.

The patient took no notice of his entrance, but lay with half-closed eyes and an expression of anger tightening about his lips. A dark flush had mounted to his brow, and his whole appearance was that of one whose thoughts were not happy ones.

Who shall attempt to portray the emotions of this turbulent soul! From the hour when made aware of his injuries, a conviction that he was nearing his end had fallen upon him, causing the mental excitement which had induced his physicians to administer the drug that had locked his senses for hours. On his awakening from the stupor the fear of death had again seized him, and a thought of the woman at Oxley, who passed as his housekeeper, had entered his mind. Rapidly passing over the events of his life — for in the hour when death approaches, the mental retrospection of man is rapid and unerring — the scene in which he had figured as “John Owen,” of a pretended marriage ceremony, and of a confiding, half-psychologized girl looking up into his eyes with an expression of trust and hopeful love, stood out before his vision, distinct from all the other pleasing and displeasing details of that wonderful panorama which none but himself could see.

In the moment that it first occurred to him, a sense

of shame at his deceit, and a feeling of regret for the deed, entered his heart, causing him to turn to his companion, and to say — “I am sorry for that affair; I wouldn’t do it over again;” — but when the man so addressed had explained the true state of the case, and confessed his part in the transaction, Norcross, instead of feeling that mental relief which his friend had expected, grew angry and sullen, with a sense of defeat and of humiliation rankling within him

So inconsistent and perverse is that human nature which has not cultivated the spiritual graces, and blossomed out under the light of heavenly love, that it will freely scorn and regret the very thing it has asked for, if that object is brought through opposite means to what it has devised.

Thus Owen Norcross, deceiving himself with the belief that he was quite willing to atone for what he called “the shabby trick” he had played on an innocent girl, — with a vague notion that he could thus propitiate the Divine Justice he expected soon to meet — felt himself out-witted when the knowledge that Leila was truly his wife came to him; and instead of experiencing gratitude and joy that a lovely young life was thus spared the ruin and wreck of blasted virtue and betrayed trust, he was overcome with the emotions of rage that surged within him.

For hours he lay, making no sound, not even unclosing his eyes when the attendant placed the spoon containing his drops to his lips, but swallowing the potion silently. Once or twice Jerome stole to the bedside and gazed down upon the face of his friend with a sigh, and then quietly retired to his post. Toward morning, how-

ever, there was a change. The sick man moved and moaned, tossing his head from side to side. A spasm of pain seized his frame, followed by a succession of chills that shook the bed violently. The dark eyes flew open, and stared with a glassy look into vacancy. There was no glance of recognition in their depths, as Jerome bent above them. Quickly the man and the nurse worked to relieve his sufferings, but without success, and the physician was called. All that medical skill could devise was done, but the paroxysms followed each other in rapid succession for several hours. About eight o'clock they ceased; the muscles lost their tremor, and the limbs grew rigid. The flushed face paled into ghastly whiteness, and the heavy eyelids fluttered down over the staring orbs. The early morning train brought Mrs. Banks, who was admitted to the chamber where the dying man lay; but he was past all consciousness, and did not acknowledge her presence.

Hours passed in perfect silence. The little group watched and waited for the end. At length it came, just as the golden hour of noon proclaimed the height of day—came silently and swiftly. There was a momentary struggle, a gasping sigh, a trembling of the limbs—then all was still; for without a word of regret, or a sign of sorrow for a misspent life, the spirit of Owen Norcross passed onward to its fate.

A sigh from the heart of the man who had been his companion in many a careless hour, and who had served him to the end; a tear of sympathy from Mrs. Carter, the benevolent old nurse; and weeping and lamentations from Kate Banks, followed the erring spirit across the deep; but prayers and blessings, and the tender

memories that arise from loving souls at the death of a good man, were wanting in this, the hour of his dissolution.

Let us follow the spirit in its gruesome passage. His mind was active, though materially he could not, had he wished, give expression to his thought. He still smarted and rebelled against his destiny. He was overcome by the sense of defeat that hung upon him, and he was chagrined at the approach of death. The man had no faith in God, no hope for the future. The spiritual light that streams in upon a righteous character, and brightens the pathway of a pure-minded soul who tries to do his duty toward heaven and man, was a stranger to him. So long had Norcross nurtured in his soul the weeds of selfish ends and personal gratification, that now they stifled him with their baneful breath. So long had he ignored the rights of his fellows, in wresting his own livelihood by unholy means from the world, that the suffocating atmosphere which is generated by an unclean spirit hung about him, obscuring the light of day, and casting a pall, like the gloom of night, above his head.

The passage to *this* man was a dark one; he saw no radiant waiting angel, to give him welcome. Unlike the pure soul of Carrie Grey, he received no glorious ovation, from tender, happy hearts in the Beyond. All was uncertain, cloudy, mysterious. He felt as one does who stands on treacherous ground, and who fears to step forward, because of the darkness around and the shakiness below. All the events of his life still passed before him. He saw himself a wayward boy, turning impatiently from a mother's counsels, and breaking away

from her restraint. His young manhood opened its experiences of willful sin and shame to his view, followed by the record of later years, with scenes of disorder and reckless misdeeds.

Toss and turn and fret as he would, he could not banish this panoramic display. It held with him, and he was obliged to face its every point. He rebelled in spirit, but the awful law of introspection held him in its grasp, and he was compelled to look upon *himself* in these hours of trial.

After a while the spirit grew conscious of the movements of those who had attended him. As yet he had not become entirely freed from the body, for although he stood apart from the bed and the rigid form it held, yet something seemed to tie him to that ghastly image, as though a clump of iron had fastened them together—*himself* and *it*.

Slowly the spirit found the mists lifting a little; his eyes gained power, and as through a blood-red vapor he beheld what was going on. The body had been removed from the bed and placed upon the cooling board; the nurse and Kate Banks had passed from the room, but Sparks remained. Soon the watcher became conscious of the entrance of two men with a box, and he felt **HIMSELF** lifted and placed in that receptacle. Yet *he* still stood upon the floor, though the body which had once been a part of him, now reposed in the wooden case.

The coffin was lifted, and taken from the room out into the open air, and placed in a waiting wagon. The spirit followed, all the while feeling a sense of tightness and confinement, as if he were in that box. A slow

journey to the parlors of an undertaker; a long vigil there of twenty-four hours; then a brief funeral service, and the consignment of the body to the grave followed. To the spirit of Norcross all seemed confused, and not easily understood. The watch of a day and night at the parlors was like an age to him. Over and over again passed before his mind the procession of events in his past life. Over and over again he strove to turn away, but it followed him persistently, and all the while the sense of restraint and suffocation—as if he were fastened in that box, though he stood apart from it—remained with him.

Only a dim idea of the funeral service reached his brain, and he paid no attention to it. The remains were not exposed to sight, but Norcross recognized the form of Kate Banks bending in tears above its casement, while once he thought he caught sight of a sligher, more girlish figure, laying a spray of roses above the confined heart.

The body had been interred, the carriages had dispersed, and the cemetery remained in shadow. The spirit turned as if to go, but something held him,—he could not move. That iron, clamp-like grasp seemed to encircle his brain, and, passing through the mold and the coffin, to bind him securely to the clay-cold form beneath. Still the clouds obscured the light, still the atmosphere seemed vile and stifling, for still the emanations from *himself* enveloped his spirit in darkness.

What was this creature of brain and nerve? Not of the physical—yet of the earth, earthly. His selfish propensities had forged a chain around his being, that now held him below the spiritual,—even in contact

with the corruptible part of nature, to which he seemed to belong. Time had no meaning to this struggling, impotent soul. Days passed, but each one to him seemed like an eternity. Bound to the perishable, he could not free himself from its confinement. He had known only the body, its passions and its gratifications, and now it seemed likely to hold him even in death ; — and all the while that everlasting parade of olden memories flashing its scenes into his brain. Thus the days passed in misery to the spirit, when, at length, he was aroused by a voice ; and as a hand fell upon the grave, laying one sprig of tender green upon the dark soil, he felt the bonds that held him snap, and Norcross stood forth, no longer bound to the decaying body, but still enveloped by the mists and shadows of earth.

CHAPTER XIII.

BREAKING THE BONDS.

WHILE the mortal remains of Owen Norcross reposed at the undertaker's rooms, he whom we have known as Jerome Sparks called upon Mrs. Carter at her own home. During the interview that passed between them, the man related to his hostess the true story of the marriage of Leila White with his old-time companion. Mrs. Carter listened with wonder and disgust at the part played in the scene by the would-be betrayer of her gentle *protégée*; but so overjoyed was the good woman to find that Leila was a wife after all, that she quite overlooked the fact that the son of her old friend must have descended to low associations, to have been mixed up with such a sinful man as Norcross; and she gazed at him as one might at a saint who has come to bring protection and even life itself to the helpless.

The old lady had not kept trace of Jerome during the years that had passed since his mother's decease, and therefore she had no idea in what scenes he had mingled, or to what haunts he had grown accustomed; and now, as he placed the proofs of that important marriage in her hands, and bade her tell Leila Norcross to call on him if any one questioned her right to bear the name of his dead friend, the tears welled from her eyes, as she kissed the rugged hand of this man of the world.

At the departure of her caller, Mrs. Carter went to Leila at once, and sitting by the side of the young

mother, who held her prattling boy upon her knee, repeated the story she had but just heard; closing by laying the marriage certificate before the astonished eyes bent upon her. The good news was almost too great for the betrayed heart to bear, and for a few moments the elder woman was kept busy in ministering to the fainting girl.

But the emotion soon passed, and, recovering herself, Leila begged her kind friend to repeat again the story. As the truth dawned upon her mind, a new light entered her eyes, and an expression of peace stole over her pallid countenance. Slowly she gathered her boy in her arms, and pressed him to her beating breast. The knowledge that she was not dishonored, that her boy had a name, and that he need never blush for his mother's sake, brought a thrill of joy to her heart, which was not even quelled by the recital of her husband's sad end. True she dropped a few tears as the story of his fatal accident was repeated to her; but what had Owen Norcross been to this young life, to cause it to throb with pain over his own miserable decline?

It was even a question now if the girl had ever loved the taciturn man who had sought her ruin. Young and inexperienced, and at an age when most susceptible to the atmospheric influence of others, Leila had met the evil genius of her fate, and falling a victim to his well-exercised psychological power, masked under an insinuating, genial, lover-like address, — which was fully calculated to attract one so sensitive as she, — had walked into his snare without thought of the danger that attended her. The poor girl, innocent in her youthful ignorance of life, unwary through the utter

simplicity of her nature, fully believed that the emotions stirring within her at his approach were really the flutterings of true heart-love; and she would at any time during those blissful weeks, while living under the spell cast upon her, have died to make the man more happy.

She had then to learn that the power she felt thrilling through her entire being was only the personal magnetism emanating from the animal nature of this man who attracted her, and which held her in its positive grasp. Well had she learned the lesson during the last two years; well did she know that the attraction, to which she had surrendered her innocent heart in days gone by, was as far removed from the glorious emotions of *spiritual love*, as the shadowy gray of night is removed from the radiant light of the noontide sun.

We need not wonder then, that this young life of only nineteen summers could feel no grief in her soul for the bitter end of the man who had wronged her. Pity for his fate, a mild compassion for his suffering, sorrow over his misspent life, moved her bosom, and prompted the request that she be taken to the place where his body lay,—a request that was granted,—and it was the girlish form of his discarded wife, that the spirit of Owen Norcross dimly perceived bending over his imprisoned form, and laying a spray of roses above its pulseless heart;—an offering brought in the name of their little child, whom the father had never seen.

Jerome Sparks Chase — as Leila learned to know the man who had served her in her direst need — interested himself in the disposal of his dead friend's effects. It

was found that Norcross had made no will, and that therefore by proving her marriage, and the birth of her child, the young widow could claim the estate of the deceased for herself and her offspring, as the rightful heirs. So adverse was she to touching anything that had once been his, and feeling certain that whatever money her husband had left could not have been gained by honorable means, Leila shrank from taking any steps to claim her estate; but Jerome had no scruples in this direction, and so energetic was he in proving the marriage valid, to the satisfaction of the courts, and in moving toward the disposition of his late companion's effects, that he got himself appointed administrator, and in the process of time Leila found not only her claims allowed by the law, but herself and her child in possession of securities to the amount of eight thousand dollars, made from the investments of every dollar that the deceased had left.

The administrator proved himself a friend indeed to the inexperienced woman. Never in his life had the man felt such a deep and lasting satisfaction as the memory of his part in the marriage ceremony had brought to him. The thought that he had saved a young life from ruin, and prevented a dishonored name from falling upon an innocent babe, brought a sense of thankfulness to his heart, and it was with real pleasure that he bent his mind to the best settlement of the estate for the benefit of the mother and child. There was none other to bring forward a claim. The administrator did not forget what Kate Banks had been to the deceased, but he was well aware that she had received her recognition as she went along, and not only the

house in Oxley, but also certain valuable investments in her own name attested to the resources she had drawn from the man she had favored; and he had no compunction in securing every penny of the estate to the widow and her son.

On several occasions during the weeks that followed the interment of Norcross' remains, Myra Grey, the blind clairvoyant, received a visit from several benevolent spirits, who seemed bent on some useful errand.

At first their purpose was not revealed, but at one of their quiet sittings, Helen Long was given a message through the entranced lips of her friend, which made the visit plain. She was told that the spirit of Owen Norcross was so weighed down by earthy, ponderable elements, that he could not break away from the material; and that the body to which he had catered so long held him by the law of attraction which he could not overcome. A band of charitable spirits, guided by the mother of the unfortunate man, had attempted to burst the bonds that held him — but these, holding so much of the physical in their nature, and composed so largely of earthy material, could not be broken by spiritual forces alone. The guide went on to say that the presence of a human battery, made up of sympathetic, compassionate, and *magnetic* mortals, was necessary at the grave, for the work to be accomplished. Such a battery would present the requisite conditions, as it would not only supply the material elements demanded, but it would act as a conductor of those spiritual forces that were seeking operation.

“We desire your coöperation in this work,” explained

the spirit. "Let a company be formed of this clairvoyant and yourself, Mr. and Mrs. Sprague, and Mrs. Norcross. Come together in sympathy and pity for the enchained spirit, and with the desire to do him good. Cherish no harsh feelings toward him, but seek only to make his condition less hard to bear. In the early afternoon of the earliest day you can arrange, let this company seek the grave of Owen Norcross, and form a semi-circle around it, and we will report results."

Each one of the parties mentioned listened with interest and amazement when informed of this. Filled with pity for the spirit unable to make its escape from its own decaying flesh, all promised to do their best in obeying the dictation of the spirit world; and, accordingly, at an early date the five friends selected visited the graveyard, and took up their position beside the lowly mound. It was the voice of Myra Grey, raised in prayer to the Most High, and inspired by the presence of a beneficent spirit, that Owen Norcross heard. It was the hand of his wife Leila laying a sprig of green upon his lonely grave, that he dimly perceived, and it was through the presence and influence of these faithful friends that the chains that bound him snapped asunder, and the spirit was freed from his unhappy bondage.

Afterward their invisible guides explained to the party that, had they not complied with the spiritual request and visited his grave, Owen Norcross would have lingered beside it, unable to get away, until the complete dissolution of the body, and the absorption of its elements into the soil and atmosphere had taken place; when the ties that held him would have been

broken and the force of his captivity have disappeared.

But although the spirit was now free to wander forth, he did not immediately rise to a holier state, nor did he so far emerge from the shadows of his own creating, as to behold the glory of a spiritualized life. The band of ministering spirits had no power to raise his soul to a more purified plane. The consequences of his misspent life still encompassed him. One who has plunged into the excitements of a thoroughly sensual existence for many years cannot appreciate nor enjoy the loftier conditions of soul life. Not all at once can he attain or understand the spiritual, but he must grow up to it by slow degrees. As yet, this man retained his hold on carnal things; they attracted him; spiritually he was without a habitation or a home, for his life had furnished no material from its good works for the upbuilding of a pure estate. There were yet many lessons to learn, much experience to gain, and a slow and painful progress, before his soul could reach a heavenly elevation.

But he knew nothing of these things; his studies had not been pursued in this connection. He was conscious of his present freedom. The cursed ties that had bound him were severed, and he exulted in the thought that he was no longer confined in the lonely graveyard. Following the bent of his mind, Norcross soon found himself among familiar scenes. He visited his old haunts, and paused beside those who had been his boon companions. The atmosphere here was congenial to him. It mingled with his own, and he could see more clearly in its folds. But although

the selfish lives of these people attracted him, although their surroundings and occupations suited him, yet this spirit did not find the satisfaction in their presence that he looked for. Those who had been wont to tremble before him, those who had once obeyed his commands, the creatures of his will, now paid no attention though he spoke to them in imperious tones. Whereas his coming or his going had been of importance before, it was unnoticed now, and the friends who in days past had served him, now acknowledged neither his claims nor his presence.

This state of things nettled the man; why it should be so he could not divine. He hardly realized that he had stepped outside the pale of earthly recognition, — so like a creature of the flesh was he, with his impulses, desires, and tendencies. Thus the days rolled on, bringing no contentment to his spirit; only unrest, dissatisfaction and impotent rebellion at his powerless condition. In due time Norcross became aware of the settlement of his affairs, though he felt but little gratitude toward the friend who conscientiously sought to administer the estate justly. For the first time, the man became aware of the existence of his child, but there was nothing in the pure atmosphere of that babe and its mother to attract him, and he fled far away from all contact with those innocent hearts.

Months lengthened into years, and yet the unhappy spirit made no sign of repentance. Only in the company of the worldly did he seek association. Several times the foggy surroundings were penetrated by a serene light, and in it he beheld a benignant face bending over him. Not always the same features, but

ever those of love and purity. Once he recognized the face of his mother, but the sight unnerved him, and he shrank away.

The man was sure that these were beings of a higher caste than his own. Something told him they sought his good; but they were not welcome to him, and the clouds of his distrust only deepened around him, obscuring the refulgent light which they had shed.

Thus did Norcross live until, moved upon by some power he did not understand, he found himself drifting in a new direction. For some time, thoughts of Charles Sprague and his family had lingered with him, and he had wondered how they were getting on. Occasionally a spasm of regret over the aimless life he had led, had recently come to him, and once or twice he caught himself wondering if it had paid after all. Was it the germ of self-condemnation beginning to put forth its power? Over and over again had the events of his life passed before him; of late they had shown a new effect. Before, the panorama had only wearied him, and he would become impatient and angry because he could not shut it out;—now it began to sting, and a feeling of distress—real and active, tinged with sorrow and regret—entered his heart, as he faced its most glaring revelations; so that, after all, the spirits who watched above him began to take hope that the hour of his sure repentance might not be far off.

Following the mystic power that led him on, Norcross found himself in the well-remembered library of Charles Sprague. The room was dimly lighted by a colored taper. As he looked steadily forward, the spirit discovered several persons present. They were seated in

a semi-circle, silently watching a young woman seated just in front of them. Presently he recognized in this company Charles and Mrs. Sprague, and beside them, on either hand, two young girls perhaps eighteen or nineteen years of age,—the one with crispy, dark curls, and the other crowned with a wealth of fluffy, yellow hair. These he knew must be Maude and Olive Sprague, and he became quite interested in noting their graceful figures and beautiful features. One other, beside the young woman in front, made up the little party, and this was Myra Grey, who, with closed eyes and clasped hands, poured forth a soulful invocation to the Father of all.

Into the soul of the wayward visitor there stole a sensation of awe, and a feeling as if he stood on holy ground. The room seemed lighted by supernal power, and he beheld himself as one haggard and with tattered garments. He was abashed, and turned to flee, but he could not move. Suddenly he beheld a number of luminous forms around him, each one of whom seemed to be directing its thought toward himself. He cowered beneath their unearthly beauty, and covered his face with his hands, but they were no protection to his sight, for in spite of them he could still see the faces, and behold the forms that clustered around that little company,—and the contrast between their radiance and his own shabbiness filled his heart with dismay.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORKING UPWARD.

As the spirit, eager to hide himself from view, but unable to get away, crouched down before the awful glory of those celestial beings who surrounded him, — the voice of the praying medium reached his understanding, and he became aware that the petition was offered for “the weak and erring spirits who have this night been brought here for their own sake.” Norcross felt that he was one of these, and he looked around to see if there were others in a like miserable condition. He saw two others, dark of mien and shabby in appearance, — if anything, their plight was worse than his own, — and taking courage from the fact that he was not the only dishevelled one present, the spirit prepared to listen to the earnest words that were being uttered.

Something in that solemn invocation, something in the attitude of the clairvoyant and her friends, went to his soul. He felt that he, individually, was being prayed for, though his name was not mentioned. Somehow it came to him that he had been drawn here by the power of the bright angels about him, and that it was by their instruction that this little band of mortals had gathered. As the man gazed and listened, a softened feeling came into his heart. He stood by the side of Charles Sprague, and a repentant mood for the wrong he had once sought to do that man came over him. Memories of what he had been and done, stole upon

him, and brought the tear of regret to his eye. Abashed, humbled, as he had never been before, Norcross saw his own misdeeds in all their hideous deformity. What was this wondrous, mystical light surrounding him? It seemed to emanate from the band of bright spirits at his right, — but in its penetrating rays he stood revealed, stripped of all mask and disguise, a creature of sin and of shame.

It was true that the spirit world had arranged this séance. By the commands of their guides, Myra Grey and Helen Long had come hither to hold a circle with the Sprague family, for the express purpose of uniting in love and sympathy with a band of exalted intelligences, in supplying a magnetic support to several sin-tossed, unhappy spirits that had been brought here for their own salvation. Although unable to see them, Owen Norcross had not been deserted by the good and wise of higher planes during the years of his wanderings. They had kept watch and ward over him, exerting their invisible influence upon his soul, until he had become slightly weary of the world's frivolity, and had begun to question the utility of his life. Then had the moment come for his awakening, and requesting their mortal friends to assemble as we have seen, these true and good intelligences had exercised such a psychological power over the willful spirit as to draw him to this place.

When a sense of shame and dishonor enters the heart of the wrong-doer, there may be a hope of his repentance. In the wondrous light that shone upon him, Norcross understood *himself*. A flush of shame mantled his countenance; a conviction of his own baseness entered

his mind; thoughts of his short-comings surged over him, until he stood self-convicted and ashamed, with bowed and drooping form.

As the prayer closed, and the mortal friends remained in silence, there gathered about the figure of the one before them — who was none other than Helen Long — a soft and vaporous substance, bright and shining, which gradually assumed human proportions and shape. By and by, the features stood out, clear and distinct, and the perturbed spirit, who was impelled to raise his head and gaze upon the scene, recognized the face of his own mother in that of the apparition. Slowly the form raised one hand and pointed upward, — then clasping its beautiful hands together, turned a beseeching look upon the little company.

The blind medium now began to speak, and each one listened reverently, knowing it was an unseen intelligence that addressed them. “The form you now behold, friends, is the sorrowing mother of one you have known. For years she has followed the son who is dear to her heart. Through scenes of wrong-doing and of sin he has passed, closely followed by this mother who yearns in spirit over his wayward course. Her son is known to you as Owen Norcross. He has been brought here to-night as to a school, where he may receive instruction. The mother comes to ask your aid in her work of love, and to thank you for all kindly and sympathetic thought that you may direct toward her and her erring one.”

“She is welcome” — responded Mr. Sprague, in earnest tones. “We will do our best to make the mother’s task a light one. She shall have our sympathy and our influence. We pray all good angels to brighten her

way. As for her son Owen, we bear him only good-will. We desire to help him upward. Whatever wrong he has done rests between himself and his God. We are not here to pass judgment. If Owen Norcross can hear my voice and look into my heart, he may realize that I am his friend, who seeks his good, and that all who are here bear him a like feeling of friendliness."

The lovely figure still standing by the side of Helen Long smiled in recognition of the words, once more waved her hands, then vanished from mortal sight. But as she thus disappeared, the *spirit* Owen became conscious of a hand touching his arm, and looking up beheld the sweet, devoted glance of his mother bent upon him. How beautiful she appeared, how radiant in form and raiment, in contrast to himself! She had always been a tender, gentle soul, spiritually-minded and pure. Oh, how the clear gaze of her eyes burned into the heart of her son! There was no rebuke in their depths, no censure, no condemnation, — only infinite love and compassion and yearning; but so far-reaching, so all-penetrating was the glance into his breast, that he felt himself scorched beneath it. That his gentle *mother* should know and see him in his unworthiness, should read his secret life and realize his shame, was too much for the guilty soul, and once more he covered his eyes, and this time with a great effort he bounded from the place.

Through dreary wastes and over rugged paths rushed the tortured spirit. He had no thought of destination, only to get away where no eye could gaze upon his woe. Filled with the conflicting emotions of self-consciousness, of shame, of dawning remorse, he felt that life

was a curse, and all sensation a *hell*. How long he fled he could not tell; but when he paused it was in a barren spot, unlovely, cold, and filled with gloom. Here for a time he tarried, for he had no desire to change. He felt himself an alien and an outcast, unworthy the companionship of the good, and fit only to wander in darkness forevermore.

The activity of his mind brought images of his past for his inspection. He saw them all, and the fires of repentance burned within him. Self-accusation spoke to his soul in brazen tongues. Self-condemnation pointed a thousand fingers of scorn at him. He felt himself accursed of God and man, and a quenchless fire flamed within his breast. At length the man wept,—long and heavily he wept, and beneath the tempest his heart grew softer, and a more submissive feeling possessed him. As he looked up, the atmosphere above him began to clear, and it seemed as though he could discern specks of blue breaking through. A sensation of languor crept over him, and gradually he felt all consciousness slipping away.

When Norcross aroused, it seemed as though his sleep had been of short duration,—but that deep slumber, guarded by attendant watchers, had passed through more than two years of earthly time. As he opened his eyes and gazed around, a feeling of wonderment entered his brain. Where before had been frowning rocks and barren roads, sprang blooming flowers and genial shade trees.

The clouds had dispersed, and the soft, mellow light like that of a summer morning, shone benignantly from a spotless sky. Seated at his side he beheld the gentle

form of his mother, her kind face beaming in joy upon him.

So calm and peaceful was the scene, so quiet the atmosphere, so restful his own position, that the man did not try to move, but lay there silently drinking in the beauty of his surroundings. He felt like a boy again in his mother's home; felt as he did before sin, and temptation, and youthful folly had seized upon him. Oh! the old life — how far off it seemed, how dark, how impure! He shuddered, and turning to his watcher with a sigh, he said: "Mother, it has been a long road, but I thank God it has led me back to *you* — at last."

Softened, humbled, repentant, he who had once scoffed at a mother's prayers, who had sneered at God and all things holy, had come through the process of time and discipline to the condition of a little child, and at last was heard *thanking God* for the gift of a mother's love. Who shall say that in this triumphant moment, that mother did not raise her own heart in praise to the Heavenly Father who had wrought this blessed work?

In that supreme interview the heart of the son was laid bare by its *own confession* to the parent who had all along followed his course. Acknowledging all the wrong he had done, expressing repentance for the mistakes and misconduct of his life, the awakening soul cried out — "Mother, mother! *what* shall I do to be saved?"

"Seek to befriend, to bless, to benefit others, my son" — was the grave reply. "Forget self, and all personal favor or desire, in the effort to brighten other lives: but, first of all, go to those you have wronged, and ask forgiveness."

The man bowed his head, and the watcher knew that a battle was going on within his breast. The struggle was a severe one, but the spiritual gained the ascendancy over the selfish part of his nature. The sufferings of his soul were intense, and well did his mother know they would be so through many years, for the more keenly a soul becomes aroused to its shortcomings, the finer are its sensibilities attuned, and the more severe are the condemnations of conscience. This is the eternal and sure retribution of Infinite Justice; the vital punishment that comes to all willful, erring souls; the inevitable result that springs from a violation of divine law.

But though that angel mother witnessed and compassionated the sufferings of her son, she did not deplore them. Though she knew the memories of the past would torture him through many future days, she did not mourn, realizing the fact that as he sought by self-conquest, and through the effort to help others, to atone for the past, the pain would gradually withdraw from his heart; and knowing that every pang that assailed him would work a sanctifying, uplifting effect throughout his life.

"Mother!" — at length he cried — "I will do it. Show me the way, and I will follow your bidding."

"Not my will, dear son, but our Father's own!" came the reply in solemn tones.

Led by the parent upon whose strength he leaned, Owen Norcross found himself conducted to various haunts on earth that he had known. At some of these places he found persons whom he had sometime victimized or taken undue advantage of. He could not

express his repentance to these people. They knew nothing of his presence or of his desire. But at some of these places he found means to benefit those he had wronged. A spirit of positive will and arbitrary mold, his native energy and influence were something to be felt and followed. Learning how to exercise his will in benevolent ways, the man succeeded in drawing more than one of his former victims out of the depths of misery, and, by his own strong influence, leading them into paths of contentment and prosperity. A deep sense of satisfaction and of peace came always to his soul after such efforts, and in finding the luxury of doing good, Owen began to lose the deepest sting that memory had planted in his breast. At length the spirit turned toward those whom we have known, and after making many futile efforts, he succeeded in reaching the attention of Mr. and Mrs. Sprague. This couple had only grown more truly one in spirit through the passing years. Mutual trust and love and devotion had been theirs. Prosperity in a worldly sense had attended them. Their two daughters, now aged respectively twenty and twenty-one, each a beauty in her own way, yet both so unlike in temperament and feature — had proved all that loving parents could desire; and peace reigned in the household where Olive and Maude made sunshine by their presence.

During the years that had passed, the Spragues had maintained their interest in Myra Grey and Helen Long, and the two mediums were often welcomed as valued guests in the home of this worthy couple. It was through the agency of the blind clairvoyant that the

spirit of Owen Norcross reached those to whom he wished to confess his wrong.

Humbly, tearfully, under the entrancement of the spirit, Myra told his repentance, confessed his error, and prayed for his pardon. Freely was this granted by the husband and wife, who bade the contrite spirit welcome to their home.

Later, through the same mediumship, he sought forgiveness for his sins from his abandoned wife; sought in prayer and contrition the pardon for a great wrong. Long since, Leila had forgiven Norcross in her heart, and now she uttered to his spirit the words of pardon which he longed to hear.

Mrs. Norcross had steadily maintained her home with her old friend Mrs. Carter. Devoting her time to her child, now a beautiful boy of nearly eight, she seemed to have no thought to give the outside world. She had grown happy with her lot, and in the friendships the spirit world had created for her. Of all the kind hearts who had befriended the young widow, perhaps none was more valued than Jerome Sparks Chase, who still remained her faithful adviser. But though it was clear that the man adored her, she had no love to give him in return; and only a sympathetic friendliness characterized her attitude toward him.

Jerome had grown since we last saw him; grown in spirituality and in pure-heartedness. The influence of Leila Norcross and of Mrs. Carter had been a help to him. Their pure lives rebuked and uplifted his own. Through their agency he had been brought to a knowledge of spirit power and communion, and this also had given a sanctifying effect to his soul.

The love born in the heart of Jerome for the gentle widow spiritualized him, and though he knew his case was hopeless, yet there also came to him the conviction that through his acquaintance with her life, *his* had become ripened, blessed, and made more worthy of God's love.

At this time Owen Norcross came in contact with his little son, and a deep affection for the child thrilled his being, giving a new brightness and zest to his labors.

Turning from the simple home where he had gained his latest pardon, the spirit sought Kate Banks, the woman who had loved him knowing all his sins.

Mrs. Banks had turned from the old life at the death of her friend. Overcome with grief at his loss, she had secluded herself from the world, and no temptation could lure her back to its iniquities. Her affection for Norcross had been deep and lasting, and horror at his untimely end had forever shattered all her weaker points. Sorrow, regret, pain, filled her heart, and she had suffered. Her naturally kind heart had turned in its affliction to others in woe, and in seeking to befriend the helpless and sad, the woman found a balm for the grief which she could not otherwise quell.

Thus the returning spirit found her, but try as he would to have her understand, Mrs. Banks could not realize his presence. Yet he tarried with her, for there was much of harmony between their natures; a natural sympathy united them, and under the influence Norcross brought, the woman's soul grew tranquil; and soon the conviction that after life's course was run on earth, she would meet her friend on high, possessed her mind.

Here the spirit lingered until other duties and other works called him, — and to this heart he returned from time to time for the true affection which never failed him, and also to bestow the silent help that lifted her soul above the shadows into the light of peace.

CHAPTER XV.

GOING HOME.

TEN years have passed since the morning when we were first introduced to the blind clairvoyant. Ten years of patient, active service for humanity on the part of that sensitive, whose sole aim and object in life seemed to be the imparting of spiritual light and mental strength to earth's weary children. So quietly did the sightless woman move along in the world, so unostentatious was the accomplishment of her good deeds, that the unthinking public knew but little of the works of benevolence she silently wrought for the needy and the afflicted. Only those who were benefited by her beneficence, and the few tried and trusted friends whom she selected to assist her in her charities, understood and appreciated her noble mission,—these, and the angels above who delight in helpful service to humanity;—but it was well; Myra Grey sought neither public attention nor the world's applause; and in her own sweet way she ministered to the hearts of the suffering, and, like the odorous lilies, dispensed beauty and fragrance to all who reached her life.

The years had lightly touched this fair and dainty creature, for they had only brought an added light to her countenance, and perhaps a deeper touch of gracious dignity to her mien. She was still slight and willowy, and so *petite* in person as to deceive one who might try to guess her age, for she would not now

pass for twenty-five. Every thought of this clairvoyant seemed one of purity. There was an absolute cleanliness of spirit within her, that manifested itself not only in the ideas she presented, and in her refined speech and manner, but also in every detail of her personal adornment, and in the entire surroundings of her life and home.

Rude speech, and unholy thought, the squalor of ignorance, and the innobility of profligacy, would stand abashed in this pure presence. No low-minded, sensual mortal could gaze upon her and not be ashamed, and even purified by the sight. No crude and undeveloped spirit could enter her sphere, without receiving such light, and instruction, and vital assistance from its illumination, as to be uplifted by the contact; and neither mortal nor spirit sought to do aught to injure or annoy the gentle ministrant who loved to do them good.

Much has been said about the power of low and impure spirits to possess and degrade such delicate mediums on earth as they may find strength to overcome. But the experience of Myra Grey, as well as that of her medium friend Helen Long, and the teachings of their angel guides, had convinced these two faithful workers that the medium who is pure in thought, and clean in habit; whose nature is aspirational, ever soaring toward the light; who loves truth; who maintains tidy and cleanly surroundings, however humble they may be; who earnestly desires to do good, and who is harmoniously obedient to the counsels of the highest spirits who approach, — need not fear the machinations nor the influence of undeveloped, evil-disposed spirits; for such are powerless to harm a life like this.

It may be that at times mediums of this class may serve as instruments of communication to a rude, uncultivated, even impure spirit; but this is wisely permitted by their spiritual attendants, for the benevolent purpose of flooding the unholy soul with light from the pure atmosphere of their medium, and of working a cleansing process therein; also to give a new moral twist to the bent of the rude spirit's inclinations, that he may experience the beauty of right living, and profit by it.

Our friends were repeatedly told by their guides, that while, in the history of spiritualism, certain mediums had been molested and mentally or morally damaged by the association of wicked spirits, yet the evil communications that wrought corruption must have been countenanced and passively endured. Either through flattery, or mercenary inducements, or from some appeal to the physical nature — the obsessing spirits had gained power and control, taking advantage of the weak points of their medium to accomplish their ends. Yet if the sensitive maintains a high character; if he follows the inward monitor that unerringly points to right and wrong; if he aspires to the companionship and guidance of unselfish, pure spirits; the weak portions of his nature will be strengthened, and so endowed with the power of resistance, as to present an effectual barrier to the insinuations, influence, force, and government of the strongest, most positive spirit of evil, — while such a spirit will only be purged, benefited, and uplifted by its approach to such a medium.

Helen Long had remained with her friend all these years. Her life was also a peaceful one. Guileless and

simple, her womanly heart cherished the most virtuous and ennobling thoughts, and in her atmosphere the guides of Myra Grey found ever the comforting and magnetic support they required for their beloved charge. Happily the companions had lived, each drawing from the other those elements of strength or of reliance which upheld and blessed.

Helen's mediumship had grown to a most useful extent. Under the watchful guidance of her spirit friends, she had unfolded its power and utilized its manifestations. From the first the invisibles had warned Miss Long not to sit for the production of etherealized forms more frequently than once in ten days: claiming that in this way she would gain the best results, without materially exhausting her own vitality. Once she had visited a circle in another city, where forms built up of solid matter were presented as living apparitions of the departed. There was great weight and ponderosity to these forms. They were crude and unrefined in manner, exhibiting an exuberance of animal spirits that left an exhausting effect upon our sensitive friend. The atmosphere of the circle-room was close and stifling. The persons present acted as if they were at a show, where the living curiosities are pinched and otherwise handled; for in this manner were the appearing forms treated, while laughter and jest abounded. The medium, rude of speech and coarse in demeanor, joked and laughed with the rest, and altogether the scene was one not calculated to attract the elevated and refined of spirit life, nor to give satisfaction and comfort to the cultivated and earnest seekers after truth on earth.

On her return home Helen questioned her guides concerning this experience, and was admonished to keep away from such scenes in future. They told her that frequently the medium she had seen was used by powerful spirits, and that many remarkable manifestations had been given through that agency. But the preponderance of power was on the physical side. The very spirits who manifested were of the earth, earthy, in make-up and desire. They were not of a high order, though at times they might deceive the very elect. That medium, though possessing fine mediumistic powers, did not live above the animal plane. Money and adulation and popularity were the possessions craved by this person, and it was impossible to attract the most worthy, grave, and wise spirits to such an atmosphere.

Helen did not coin money by her mediumistic gifts. She was not allowed to sit often enough, nor to admit a sufficient number to her séances for that. Only once in ten days could she give a really successful and satisfactory sitting, and at such times not more than twelve persons, including herself and the clairvoyant, were permitted entrance. But although her income from this source was small, yet the satisfaction, the joy, and the peace that attended her life, through the consciousness of her work, more than compensated for all lack of pecuniary reward.

On many occasions Miss Long had given her time and powers to some worthy cause, thus promoting the good of Spiritualism, and at the same time aiding the benevolent work that appealed to her sympathies; — just as Myra had often and often given of *her* means to

the needy, or dispensed her medial gifts to the weary and heavily laden who sought her presence in search of consolation or advice, but had no money to pay for her services.

Within a year, however, Helen Long had come into an inheritance which promised to increase her powers of usefulness, and to enlarge her field for philanthropic work. Early one morning the mediums were called upon by their friend Mr. Sprague, who, taking a newspaper from his pocket, read to them an advertisement from its columns, calling for information of the heirs of the late Jonathan Small, of J——.

Jonathan Small had been the maternal grandfather of Helen Long. He had been dead many years, and it was not known that he had left any property, except a piece of land, which he had claimed to own, but which, owing to some defect in its title-deed, his wife had not been able to hold. Since then his wife, also his only daughter, Helen's mother, had passed away, leaving no near relatives but the girl whose early struggle with the world we have seen.

During her friendly association with the Spragues, Helen had imparted to them her simple history, and that morning, on opening his paper, Charles had seen the advertisement mentioned, and had associated it with his young friend. While listening to the conversation that was passing upon the subject between Helen and Mr. Sprague, Myra passed into the trance condition, and informed her listeners that Helen should at once communicate with the solicitors who had inserted the advertisement in the papers; that the validity of her grandfather's title-deed to the land had been dis-

covered; and that it was now necessary for her to prove her heirship and claim her property. The piece of land had grown very valuable during the twenty-two years that had passed since her grandparent's decease. It now formed part of a city, and several large business blocks had been erected upon it. The entranced medium bade Helen place the old watch — which was an heirloom in her grandfather's family — also the private papers of her mother, that she possessed, in Charles Sprague's hands, and to authorize him to transact all necessary business in her name.

The counsel so deliberately given was closely followed. In due time Helen received an answer to the letter she had written the law firm, in which proofs of her identity were requested. Taking the case in hand, Charles Sprague pushed it with the finest results. Not only was her claim allowed and rights established, but the heiress received a handsome offer for her property, which was accepted, — the proceeds of which her friend Sprague invested in good securities.

And now a change approached the simple home life of our friends. Over sixteen years of mediumistic service had the blind clairvoyant given to the world. For that length of time had she rejoiced in the spiritual vision that more than compensated her for the years of girlhood and of opening womanhood that had been passed in the environment of physical blindness. Ten years of this period have we known and loved her; and it will be our grateful privilege to follow the sweet, pure life onward to a supernal clime.

Within the last half year Myra's step has failed. Her physical vitality, never very robust, has fallen low.

Many days has a weakness, a want of power, settled upon her frame. Gradually, the physical forces of life are withdrawn. Appetite has failed, the power to fall into slumber recedes, and all the indications go to prove that Myra is nearing her immortal home.

The friends who love this rare soul rebel, and do not speed its flight. They are sorrow-stricken at the thought of her going. Helen mourns in secret, but outwardly she gives only cheerful words and hopeful signs to the frail creature now fully depending upon her. Dear old Mrs. Carter, who says she has "come to nurse her lamb back to health and strength," moves through the house with saddened face and tear-dimmed eye. Leila Norcross, a happy mother, who has always looked upon Myra as an angel of light, comes daily to offer friendly service, or to bring some gift of fruit or flowers. The carriage of the Spragues is often seen before that humble dwelling, as its occupants alight upon some loving mission. Maude and Olive, bright-eyed, clear-souled, intelligent, loving young women, grieve at heart over the coming change, that means loss to them, but *transfiguration* to its object; — while their parents refuse to entertain the thought that almost forces itself upon them.

Through all the attention, the care, the loving anxiety that she feels and appreciates, one thought runs like a golden thread through Myra's heart. She is *going home* — she is *going home*. Not a vein of sadness mingles with her meditations. Not a shadow of doubt or dread obscures the serene light of her spirit. Not a ripple of discontent disturbs her tranquil heart. She is *going home*, — oh, how precious the thought! A

tender compassion for the friends who will miss her fills her breast, but they are not ignorant of immortality, and in thought they can follow her. She will come to them, and they will lose no friend in her departure, for her love and her spirit will more closely enfold them.

So the thought is sweet to the fading life, and over and over again, in the quiet hours of the day, or during the sleepless watches of the night, Myra silently chants the most blessed of all refrains — “I am going home! I am going home!”

The house is filled with an unearthly light; its atmosphere is one of the deepest peace. Murmuring hearts cease to mourn in the ineffable serenity that fills every portion of the dwelling. The days in passing bring only added weakness to the physical organs, but greater strength to the spiritual senses, and keener perception to the mental faculties of the invalid.

More than once glorified forms have been seen standing by the sick bed, or gliding through the hall-ways of this abode. Tender, radiant beings from another world, beautifully clad, and crowned with precious flowers, watch beside the helpless one who welcomes their approach. There is no cause for repining here. The world may grow jubilant, and thank its God for such a death as this.

The waning hours proclaimed the departure of night, and the first rosy gleams in the east heralded the approach of day. For the last hour, Myra, who had remained almost motionless for days, had lain with outstretched hands, and with smiles breaking over her countenance. Helen Long and Mrs. Carter watched and waited for the end that was sure to come. Swiftly

the glad look deepened on those lovely features. Presently the pale lips moved, and once more, as in days of yore, the tuneful voice soared high in sweetest song. The watchers listened with bated breath, as the tender melody floated out upon the hearkening air.

“When the mists have risen above us,
As our Father knows his own,
Face to face with those who love us
We shall know as we are known” —

came in thrilling sweetness, and then the tones faltered low, only to be caught again :

“We shall know as we are known ;
Never more to walk alone, —
For the day of light is dawning,
And the mists have cleared away !”

Slowly the sweet voice sank into silence. A solemn, unearthly whiteness settled down on brow and face, as the gentle heart of the songstress ceased to beat.

CHAPTER XVI.

AMONG THE BLEST.

"It was a peaceful ending to a most beautiful life;" so said the watchers at that dying bed. No loud lamentations rent the air, no murmuring complaint disturbed the sacred precincts of that home. They robed the loved body in dainty garments, and left it to rest upon a bed of flowers, in the apartment where Myra had been wont to dispense truth and joy to eager hearts. Folds upon folds of snowy silken fabric, fastened with a spray of creamy roses, depended from the bell-knob, telling its quiet tale to the passer-by; and on the day of the funeral, those who entered that hallowed dwelling found their footsteps muffled by the beds of flowers over which they passed, — even the hall-ways being strewn with blossoms and twigs of green, that no sound of footfall might disturb the stillness.

The watching over the beloved form was a holy one to Helen and the old nurse. Lights gleamed around them unborn of earth; forms not of mortal mold kept them company. The house seemed guarded by a retinue of angels, and only the most lovely of spiritual experiences were theirs.

On the afternoon of the third day the simple service of holy song and prayerful word was rendered, and, borne amid the billows of fragrant flowers, all that was mortal of the blind clairvoyant was consigned to its last resting-place.

Helen Long returned to her solitary home, made more precious to her heart through the associations of the last few days, to continue the life she had formerly led. How she missed the gentle companionship, the physical presence of her friend, none could tell; but there were days when she *knew* Myra was by her side, and in listening to the whispers of love and counsel that the sainted spirit gave, the sadness passed away from heart and brain.

Under the ministrations of her angel friends Helen continued to exercise her mediumship for human good; and the days grew more and more full of brightness. In due time, she became highly interested in a most worthy young merchant whom she had met at the home of Mr. Sprague, and with the sanction of her spirit guides, and with the best wishes and loving congratulations of her kind earth friends, Helen Long became the wife of Arthur Grant. After this event came new powers, new lines of usefulness into her life. The genial companionship, magnetic support, and devoted affection that her husband supplied, seemed to strengthen the forces of her own being, and to assist her spirit band in operating upon them, so that henceforth Helen not only brought evidences of immortality to a doubting world, but wherever there were mortals suffering with the weakness and pain of physical disease, her presence alone imparted strength, healing and health.

In a happy home, with sympathetic companionship, surrounded by kind friends, we leave Helen Grant, knowing that in the years to come her life will find its rich fruition.

Turning from the contemplation of mortal events, we

will follow the spirit of Myra Grey in its passage from earth. At that supreme moment when soul parted with flesh, and all that was corruptible loosened its hold upon the imperishable, the spiritual eyes of the enraptured girl gazed upon a scene of ineffable grandeur. To her vision, there were no walls to the room, but the outlook was broad and vast, and transcendently beautiful. Bowers of green, and banks of blooming flowers—not one withered or dusty blossom among them—refreshed her sight; an atmosphere soft and balmy, and of roseate hue, thrilled her being. Forms clad in dainty garments stood beside her, or passed to and fro. As she watched these bright beings, a glad smile illumined her countenance, for she now recognized in two of them her darling mother, and beloved aunt Carrie.

Softly, sweetly, came a delicious, dreamy sensation over her entire frame, and she felt as if some one was gently drawing her out of a confining casement. Gradually upon her ear there stole a strain of sweetest music, at first so deliciously low that she could not tell when it commenced; gaining in power, but always low and wondrously sweet—until, catching up the melody, the dying girl poured forth her soul in song.

The music continued, and still the sensation of withdrawal went on. When it ceased Myra could not tell, but soon she found herself standing upon a bank of radiantly green moss. Her form was enveloped in a lace-like, snowy garment, that fell in folds to her dainty feet. Her soft brown hair fell loosely over her shoulders, as she lifted her head and drew in one long, deep draught of the invigorating air.

She was no longer blind. She could see. All around her were beautiful bowers and shining habitations. Smiling faces beamed upon her, gracious forms pressed forward in loving welcome. At her feet she beheld the apartment of her own house, upon the bed of which she recognized her own pulseless image. Beside it kneeled her friend Helen, while the old nurse closed its faded eyes, and crossed its nerveless hands. The sight brought a new consciousness to her mind. She had *passed through* death. Life — *immortal life* was gained. Oh, the pleasure and the peace of dying! How sweet, how glorious it had been!

The enfranchised spirit turned with new interest to the scenes around her; and as she did so she felt the embrace of encircling arms and found herself encompassed by a mother's love. Oh! the joy of that most holy meeting; and how it was enhanced when dear "aunt Carrie" followed, with signs and words of welcome and devoted tenderness. Her father, too, so noble, wise, and kind, brought happy greeting to his child; and one, with the face and form of beautiful maidenhood, her lovely features cast in saintly mold, her figure enveloped in clouds of billowy light — a messenger of peace to earth; a missionary of light to darkened souls — stood before the new comer, chanting a wondrous song of love and gladness; and in this celestial maiden Myra recognized and found her precious sister Pearl. Other friends and relatives came in due time to greet the arisen spirit, and in the pure, glad welcome she received, Myra knew that she had indeed found her own. The home to which she was led by angel hands proved one of rare beauty and enjoyment

to this delighted spirit. A substantial abode, fairy-like in appearance, delicate in construction, dainty in appointment, — yet real and enduring in quality, met her eye. The surroundings were of the most delightful description, and afforded a charming view from this habitation.

The new life that opened before Myra Grey proved to be one of perfect pleasure and contentment. Fresh duties, higher studies, delightful explorations, constantly attracted her mind. To be freed from the limitations of matter; to experience the freedom of perfect sight; to know that she was never to grope in the dark again; to enjoy the utmost liberty of locomotion, — all brought to her soul a keen sense of satisfaction, and filled her heart with a finer appreciation of life. Perfectly at ease in the exquisite home of her parents — in loving companionship with them and her sister Pearl; never at a loss for congenial employment or association; always finding something new to interest her, Myra thrilled with exultation of spirit; and an enthusiastic, warm, pulsating sense of joy and gratitude for this soul existence, moved her being.

Fair as a lily, beautiful as only a pure soul can be, the arisen girl gained many friends among the exalted intelligences of her own sphere. There were wise and learned ones who were pleased to guide such a willing pupil as she into new paths of mental training and study. There were cultivated spirits whose idealistic natures found expression in artistic productions, who delighted to reveal their marvelous works of art to the enraptured girl. There were grand masters of musical composition, and rare singers of great power, who did

not hesitate to pour their richest measures of harmonic sweetness upon the listening air in honor of this faithful soul. And Myra, her heart throbbing with new power, her entire being thrilling with delight, listened to the words of wisdom or instruction of her trusted teachers; drank into her very life the rare creations of æsthetic art; or revelled in that sea of wondrous melody that vibrated throughout the atmosphere.

Yet if there were friendships to make among the gifted and sublimer souls, there were also tender associations to form with those less talented, but who were none the less faithful, noble, and true. During her excursions with trusted guides into various parts and localities of the new world, Myra was often met by the smiling faces and outstretched hands of those who hastened to do her honor, and to express their love and esteem. Dainty gifts of flowers and fruits; exquisite offerings of marvelous laces, and gem-like adornments for her person; articles of rare workmanship, shell-like and translucent, were laid upon the altar of her acceptance. These were the spirits who had been blessed and benefited in divers ways through the mediumship of this girl when she trod the earthly way.

Some of them had been uplifted by her pure life and example from planes of restless unhappiness, or even conditions of almost hopeless degeneracy, to a sphere of usefulness and peace; others had been enabled to bind up the wounds of mortal friends by reaching them through her medial agency; and still others had wrought much good in different ways to erring souls, because of the power and willing assistance she had afforded them. Was it any wonder that these grateful

souls approached the gentle heart with song, and word of love, and thankful offering?

Among those who came, Myra recognized sweet Agnes Clarke, the mother of Olive Sprague; and the friendship that she brought, in loving recognition of the help she had received, shone like a ray of light, until it flashed out in splendor as a living gem upon the bosom of the recipient. The mothers also of Helen Long and Leila Norcross approached, bearing fadeless offerings of lilies and roses, which were placed at Myra's feet.

In time Owen Norcross sought the presence of this happy spirit. He was so changed in appearance, so improved in personal address, so humble in manner, that she hardly recognized him at first. But he made himself known, and implored the lady to visit his spiritual home. She did so, and found it a neat, substantial dwelling, furnished in simple taste; pleasant but not luxurious. "I am preparing this home," he said, "with my own labors. Every shred of material that goes into it I honestly earn. My mother would bring her possessions to grace its walls;—and *that* I may allow in time—but I feel that I do not deserve any good thing unless I work for it."

Upon a stand beside him bloomed one lily—not white, but with petals like silver that shone as though burnished. The flower emitted a fragrance that filled the atmosphere. Norcross lifted this plant and presented it to his guest, as he said: "I have watched and tended it for this,—within its heart rest the hopes and aspirations that came to me in my waking hour. From the darkness they bloomed forth, as this blos-

som blooms to-day. Keep it, dear lady, in fadeless remembrance of a human soul that you have helped toward self-pardon and peace."

Touched by the tender homage, the graceful acts of these grateful hearts, Myra received their gifts with appreciation and love, — all the more gladly because she understood that each offering was the work or production of the personal life of the giver; that from the thankful heart and loving thought had arisen such elements and material as had become wrought into the substance and texture of each fabric, gem or flower that she received. Hence, as their very essence and nature were of the spiritual, these gifts would remain spotless and bright always — each a perpetual beauty and a thing of joy forever.

Aunt Carrie's home was situated not far from the beautiful abode where Myra dwelt. This dear relative lived in happy association with her sister Mabel — a bright messenger — their parents, and other dear friends. Myra passed many pleasant hours in the company of these precious souls, and the two homes became the scene of many delightful entertainments.

But in the participation of these joys, our friend did not forget the suffering souls that dwell on earth; nor did she neglect the unhappy spirits who have not yet ascended to a plane of purity and peace. Much of her time was spent in contact with earthly conditions, where she exercised her pure influence for the amelioration of human suffering, and for the enlightenment of the ignorant. Through the experiences she had gained Myra was well qualified to serve as a missionary of light to darkened souls, and she never spared effort or

time in ministering to the afflicted, or in bearing truth and knowledge to those who lived in doubt.

Guided by her angel friends, instructed by wise teachers, Myra passes much of her time in seeking out unfortunate spirits, who in the lower walks of immortal life bewail the hopelessness of their lot, or weep over the mistakes of the past. To such of these who will not turn away from her advances, this bright angel proves a bearer of glad tidings, a helper in the hour of their distress. And thus leaving her in the loving service of our Father we bid the gentle spirit — Farewell.

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